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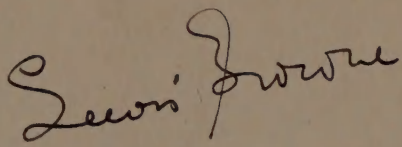

A Short History of the Jews

A Short History of the Jews

Down to the Roman Period

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BY

E. E. KELLETT

Author of *The Story of Myths*

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PREFACE

This short sketch of Jewish history is written on "liberal" lines, and accepts the chief results of modern Old Testament criticism. It aims at giving a *rational* account of the development of one of the most remarkable nations the world has known. Short as it is, and of necessity avoiding the discussion of disputable points, it is hoped that it may, within its humble sphere, satisfy the scholar while giving to its less erudite readers little that they will afterwards have, more or less painfully, to unlearn.

The Introduction deals briefly with the origin and nature of the main sources from which the succeeding narrative is drawn; and incidentally describes the character of the people and of the times to which we owe those sources: long experience having convinced the author that, owing to ignorance of these matters, the Old Testament is often read either without interest or in the wrong fashion. In order to carry the story down to New Testament times, a short summary is given of the period, till lately too much neglected, between the Return from Babylon and the birth of Christ. As has been

well observed by the chief English student of that period, without a knowledge of the four centuries that preceded Jesus, the rise of Christianity must seem a phenomenon, not miraculous, which it was, but utterly inexplicable, which it was not.

A Short History of the Jews

INTRODUCTION

I

The Old Testament Conception of History

In studying the "historical" books of the Old Testament we must begin by dismissing from our minds the idea of history as a science, which we may have gained from reading the works of modern writers. The object of men like Stubbs and Gardiner can be found most admirably expressed by the latter at the beginning of his book on the Gunpowder Plot. Briefly put, that object is, by the careful comparison of all the documents they can find, to discover the actual truth, and then to tell it. For this purpose they try to subjugate in themselves all prepossessions and prejudices, to examine impartially their authorities, and to enter as far as possible into the minds of the men of whom they write. If a man has left authentic letters, they sift them, compare them, contrast them with those of others. Resolved to find out what *really* happened, and what were the *real* characters and aims of the

actors, they ponder over the narratives of men who had a chance of knowing the facts, over the declarations of eyewitnesses, over the evidences of inanimate things. They travel to the scenes of their incidents, and judge on the spot as to the likelihood or unlikelihood of events said to have happened there. They accept nothing without careful consideration; for they know how difficult it is for even truthful men to tell the truth. As for rumours, for guesses, for traditions, they dissect them with scrupulous care, and accept them only when they harmonize with what can be ascertained on better evidence.

Almost more rigidly than all else do they reject the picturesque and romantic stories, in which certain writers, remote in time from the events they describe, delight to indulge. It is a dictum of Hallam, in his *View of the Middle Ages,* that *circumstantiality,* which enhances the credit of an eyewitness, diminishes that of a late historian; and hence we find modern writers sifting with the utmost care those anecdotes which embellish the pages of authors more fond of the interesting than of the true.

Only when all this has been done do our Stubbses and Rankes allow themselves to assert a fact, to

draw a moral, or to teach a philosophy of their history. For more than all do they strive, so far as they are true to themselves, to avoid what is called "tendency-writing": that is, the use of history to prove a preconceived theory. It is of course impossible for them to work without formulating some hypothesis. But, like men of science in similar case, should they find that hypothesis inconsistent with fact, they throw it aside without hesitation.

Such a method of writing history demands, obviously, an almost superhuman measure of talent, conscientiousness, and labour; and indeed it represents an ideal which can never be fully attained. The perfect historian has not been born, and never will be born. A writer like Macaulay, for example, may honestly endeavour to deal out fair treatment to both sides; but his conviction that one side was essentially right may often spoil his good intentions. There is no reason to think that Treitschke and Froude were *consciously* dishonest; but their violent prejudices vitiated their work, often almost to worthlessness. Even the more "judicial" historians, like Hallam, Ranke, or Acton, may and do fail to reach their aim. The very devotion to impartiality may be a prejudice: for there are cases in which one side has been very wrong and the other very

nearly right: and then the "impartial" historian, with his almost irresistible tendency to strike a mean, may do serious injustice to the better cause. An historian's goodness of heart may itself mislead him. The incorruptible Macaulay was too hard on the nimble and shifty politicians of an age of constant revolutions; and the rectitude of Acton made him, when appraising Cavour or Mazzini, as excessively severe as a "hanging judge." Nevertheless, the general truth remains—modern historians, as a rule, *do their best* to find out the facts and to judge fairly men and their actions.

Very different, and inevitably so, is the method and purpose of the Hebrew writers. In the first place, they had few authentic documents to work upon. For many of their facts they had nothing better to hand than vague oral tradition. The author of the Books of Kings does indeed refer to the "chronicles of the Kings of Judah and Israel"; but he had no means of comparing them with other works, and no scientific principles of comparison even if other works had existed. He certainly neither did nor could sift his authorities with any care; and he assuredly made many mistakes both as to facts and as to the characters of the statesmen and warriors of whom he wrote. The author of

the Book of Judges—we shall see shortly in what sense we use the word "author"—was in even worse plight. He had to rely solely on older writings, of unknown *provenance,* which were themselves based on popular tales, songs, and family sagas the truth of which had to be taken on trust. He was like an historian of William Wallace, who should have no more reliable foundation on which to build than the tales told by Blind Harry. Writing, probably, not earlier than 600 B. C., he was dealing with events of four or five hundred years before his time, and he had no materials for checking his authorities, nor, had the materials been there, would he have known how to use them. Accordingly, he took the earlier work as he found it, and copied it slavishly —for long passages, indeed, word for word. It is ridiculous to fancy that we have here a "history" like Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico,* or, again, like the same writer's edition of Robertson's *Charles V,* which enriches and corrects the older work on every page.

But not only had this author no control over his materials. Far worse than this, he had his theory to prove. Brought up in a certain religious school, he held certain doctrines of that school, the explanation of which will be given in a later section of this

Introduction. One of the main ideas of this coterie was that every disaster suffered by the Hebrew nation was due to a desertion of the national God Yahweh—and of Yahweh as the coterie understood him. The writer did not know, and could not be expected to know, that the Yahweh of Gideon's time was very different from the Yahweh of his own, and that what was "sin" in 600 B. C. was inevitable and justifiable to the children of Israel of the era with which he was dealing; in a word, he had no conception that the Israelite religion was not stationary, but progressive. He was, to use the modern phrase, destitute of the historic sense—and that inevitably and most pardonably. Hence, taking the old stories pretty much as he found them, he *interpreted* them in his own manner. To each he prefixed a commentary which gives us an admirable picture of the views of his own time, but which would certainly have surprised his heroes. It is as if a writer of to-day should judge Elizabeth and her advisers on the principles of the Reform Bill of 1832. He found that his ancestors had suffered a series of military defeats; and he could not believe that these disasters had not been the direct punishment of sin. Moreover, *he wished to preach this view to the men of his own day,* lest they in

their turn should commit the sin which had been, he fancied, the ruin of their forefathers. This is the secret of his invariable preface to his tales of woe: "The children of Israel again did evil in the eyes of Yahweh; and he sold them into the hands" of this heathen potentate or the other. And the "evil" consisted, first, in failing to make an utter destruction of the Canaanite nations—a failure for which their weakness was alone to blame—and, secondly, in worshipping Baals, Astartes, ephods, teraphim, and the like—acts which, at the time when they were committed, were no more censurable than a sacrifice offered by a pious Roman of the Republic to Jupiter or Juno. This is the theory known as the Deuteronomic; it is proclaimed and illustrated in full by the author of the so-called Fifth Book of Moses, a work written not earlier than the reign of Manasseh, and one which is as much of a "tendency-writing", and as little of a true "history", as Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* or Kingsley's *Hypatia*. True, it is unfair to call it a forgery; for the notions of ancient times as to plagiarism and the rights of an author in his own name were not like ours. But it is a romance; exceedingly beautiful and picturesque, yet a romance, and one with a very decided purpose. To the school of the author of Deuteron-

omy the "author" of Judges (i. e. of Judges ii, 6, to xvi, 31) belonged; and to both writers the Deuteronomic ideas were of vastly more importance than the "objective" truth of the story. Indeed, the very idea of objective truth was foreign to them.

Hence it is that we find in Judges a full machinery of prophets and angels, speeches and supernatural warnings. It is well-known that ancient writers, even such men as Thucydides and Tacitus, considered themselves quite at liberty to invent speeches for their heroes, of which the best thing to be said is that though they never were spoken they might have been. The famous Funeral Oration of Pericles, for example, represents not what Pericles said, but what Thucydides thought it natural that he should say on a certain occasion; while the address of Galgacus to his troops is a sheer impossibility for Galgacus, though it expresses Tacitus very admirably. There is no need to imagine that the Old Testament writers acted on any different principle. We find, for example, the author of Joshua ascribing to that general an allocution which simply *could* not have been spoken by him. It is remarkably similar to the dying speech of Moses on the one hand and to that of Samuel at Gilgal on the other: and all three give utterance to

views which, however they may differ among themselves, belong to far later stages of Jewish thought than those of their reputed authors. So with the author of Judges. He introduces us to an angel whose ideas are extraordinarily like his own, and to a prophet who says not what could have been of use to the man of the time, but what the Deuteronomic mind conceived that he ought to have said.

The theory would have coloured the history even if it had been sound *as* a theory. But it is *not* a true and sound theory. National disasters do *not* always follow on national apostasy; nor do national triumphs always reward national virtue. Many a noble nation has been overthrown by a nation less noble but more powerful; and many a community has gained victories not merely in spite of, but because of, its unscrupulous wickedness. Providence, said Napoleon, is on the side of the big battalions; and, if for "Providence" we substitute "success in war", the maxim is generally true. Hence this theory, the product of a peculiar series of events in the Jewish history, tended doubly to distort the sense for the past in its supporters. As we said above, even if true, it would have made them careless of fact: but it was false, and there are not many facts that

even apparently lend colour to it. To make it plausible, facts had to be distorted, omitted, or explained away. Yet there are some who still cling to it, so persistent is the belief that even in this life goodness must be rewarded and vice punished. For Christians it ought long ago to have been destroyed by Christ himself, who laid it down once for all that Towers of Siloam do not fall exclusively on sinners, and that those who are wicked above others are not picked out to perish before the altars.

Thus Judges, as we have it, is a tendency-writing. But fortunately, as we saw, the author did not actually *rewrite* his stories. They had already been written down before his time by a man to whom his theory did not appeal: and he did not often trouble to change the setting into which that previous writer had cast them. He did indeed omit stories that refused to square with his ideas. Thus he cut out the tale of Micah, that of Gibeah, and probably that of Abimelech. He added, perhaps out of his invention, that of Othniel's victory over Cushan-rishathaim—a narrative so bald and colourless as to indicate that he was weak as a story-teller. Now and then, when a phrase or two of the old narrative jarred on him, he altered or omitted it. But, usually, he retained for us incidents, like

that of Jephthah's vow, which, while throwing a flood of light on the feelings of Jephthah's time, must have scandalized the men of the Deuteronomic era: and for this honesty we owe him thanks.

His method of propagating his views was then, as a rule, not the distortion of his facts, but their interpretation. He hoped, by the use of a running commentary on them, to lead the minds of his readers to view these facts in the way in which he himself viewed them. We need not accept the commentary as Gospel; and we may be grateful that a man of such a cast of mind has yet preserved for us a treasure of inestimable value, which *we* esteem for reasons totally at variance with those which actuated *him*.

If we wish to find a true parallel to this author, we shall not seek him in Tacitus, though the *Annals* were meant to preach the villany of despotisms and the virtues of aristocratic republics; still less in Thucydides, in whom we can clearly see a constant endeavour to check his political predilections and do justice all round. A closer analogue is Plutarch, whose *Lives* are only disguised moral lectures. And even Plutarch, having access, in most cases, to truer sources of information than were at the disposal of the author of Judges, is more "historical"

than he. Could we find an Icelandic Saga, based on oral tradition, in which the Saga-man sought to convey an ethical or religious lesson, we should have nearly the exact parallel we wish. Nearest of all is perhaps one of those Lives of Saints, such for example as Eddi's *Life of St. Wilfrid*, in which the pious writer's aim is only secondarily to tell the literal truth, and primarily to exalt the merits of his hero and further the great cause of the Church, with which he believes the good of his country to be inextricably bound up.

I have dwelt thus fully on the Book of Judges because it is perhaps the best example to be found of the type of work on which we have to rely in studying the history of the Jews. But the rest are like it. In the Books of Samuel, for instance, we find at least two, and probably three or more, sources: the chief difference being that here they are so inextricably mingled, and the text often so corrupt, that the best scholars confess themselves unable to put things straight. The authors of the Books of Kings, again, though remarkably honest, are yet swayed by their peculiar theory as to what constituted merit and demerit in their rulers; and they rely in places on those "Lives of the Saints" which have given us the immortal chapters about Elijah

and Elisha—chapters of incomparable beauty as stories, but offering us, it cannot be doubted, pictures of the age very different from what we should find in the *Chronicles* of Omri or Ahab.

It may be asked how, if our authorities are of the character thus described, a "History" of the Jews is at all possible. Must we not give up the task as hopeless? The answer is, that we proceed exactly as other historians do with other nations and periods: we sift, we compare, we make allowances, and finally put down what, in our judgment, seems reasonably probable. Nor are the books above mentioned our only authorities. In certain cases we have contemporary documents like the prophecies of Amos and Isaiah, or like the records of Egypt and Assyria. Again, we have the evidence of geography and archæology—evidence which, when attainable, is often the most trustworthy of all. Finally, we have the parallel histories of other nations and peoples, which give us certain general notions of probability, and which, combined with our knowledge of human nature, enable us to check or confirm what we have learnt in other ways. Thus, for instance, men are gradually learning how far to trust tradition and how far to distrust it. The true history of Charlemagne, compared with the legends

about him; the true history of Troy, as learnt from archæology, compared with the Homeric poems; these, and things like them, afford us hints which, if used with caution, may enable us to form plausible conjectures as to Gideon, Samson, or Elijah. Much, of course, must be read with a "perhaps": but much remains that, if not based on evidence sufficient to hang a man, is yet probable with that probability which, as Bishop Butler said, is "the guide of life".

II

YAHWEH

No one can read the religious history of Israel aright who fails to realize that it is a history of *progress* from a somewhat low and barbarous conception of the Deity to a pure and lofty one. In the language of physics, we have to deal here not with statics but with dynamics. That this fact is not oftener perceived is largely due to the order in which the very various parts of the Old Testament are now arranged. Thus, for example, the first chapter of Genesis, with its picture of a creative God, impressive and even sublime, is one of the latest written of all the Old Testament chapters. That

God is the conception of a priestly writer who lived long after the destruction of the Israelite kingdom, and differs in every respect from the "Yahweh" of the second chapter, who is the deity as conceived by a Judahite writer of the age of Jehoshaphat. Very little, if any, of Exodus can have been known to Samuel or Saul; and Deuteronomy cannot possibly have been in existence in the time of Isaiah. Reading the Bible as it now stands, one can hardly help fancying that the Hebrew of David's time had almost as clear a conception of God and of the "law" as had the Apostle Paul or his teacher Gamaliel. Nothing could be further from the truth. To take but one example: the Law forbids images. Yet "high places", Baals, obelisks, "graven images", not only were common down to the time of Josiah, but seemed to the majority of the nation perfectly legitimate and even praiseworthy. Rachel carried teraphim from Laban's house. Rachel may perhaps seem somewhat unenlightened; but David himself had teraphim in his bed chamber, and habitually consulted an ephod. Somewhat later than David, *molten* images were forbidden, and the series of Ten Commandments now embedded in the thirty-fourth chapter of Exodus was probably recognized as binding; but these were concerned

entirely with a semiheathen ritual, and had nothing lofty, moral, or monotheistic about them. There was no special sanctuary for Yahweh till after the destruction of Samaria, more than a hundred years after Ahab. The sanctuary at Bethel, and that at Dan, were just as holy as that at Jerusalem; while almost every hill had an altar or sacred pillar by which Yahweh, in one or other of his many characters, might be duly honoured. It is tolerably certain that, till the great invasion of the Philistines, Shiloh was the chief abode of the god; but there were hundreds of others, less prominent but equally divine. Not till after the Exile was the unique position of Jerusalem established beyond controversy—nay, even then the Samaritans, following the example of their fathers, worshipped on "this mountain" of Gerizim.

With the deity himself the history is similar—a history of gradual victory over other divinities, or rather over himself in varying manifestations. We must divest ourselves at the very outset of the idea that he was to the early Israelites what God is to us, or even what he was to Amos or Isaiah. To translate the name, as our versions do, by "The Lord", and especially to print the words in capitals, is to encourage one of the most mischievous errors that

have ever misled the world. It is this confusion of Yahweh with the true God that is responsible alike for Cromwell's massacre at Drogheda, and for the resistance of Krüger to rational reform; for the murders perpetrated by the Bible-loving Covenanters; nay in part for the sack of Louvain and the atrocities at Dinant. Yahweh is the true God only in the sense in which the England of Hengist and Horsa is the British Empire of to-day.

He was, in fact, a tribal deity, not much more respectable than the tribal god of some Kaffir nation: essentially warlike, bloodthirsty, jealous, capricious. He differed but little from Chemosh or Milcom, Anath or Ram, the "abominations" of the neighbouring races; the patriotic Israelite naturally regarded him as more powerful than the others, but did not deny the supremacy of these others within their own bounds. Beyond the limits of Israel Yahweh had no power. "From thy face I shall be hid", said Cain to him when banished from Eden. Still more remarkable are the words of David to Saul: "If it be Yahweh that hath stirred thee up against me, let him smell an offering; but if it be the children of men, cursed be they before Yahweh; for they have driven me out this day that I should not share in the inheritance of Yahweh, *say-*

ing, Go, serve other gods." Nothing could show more clearly that when in Philistia David would worship Dagon; when in Moab, Chemosh. Nay, in Sheol, the land of darkness and shade, to which the gibbering ghosts of men fled after death, there was no remembrance of Yahweh, and none to give him thanks. It was left for later prophets and psalmists to discover that even if we made our bed in Sheol, behold, Yahweh was there: and the first promulgators of this opinion must have sounded like a Luther in the ears of a devout Catholic.

It is, indeed, one of the most wonderful things in all history that this limited and in some respects detestable deity should have been gradually transformed, by the successive labours of noble-minded prophets and sages, into the one God of the whole earth, nay, of the Universe. It is still more wonderful that he should have become not only omnipotent, but merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abounding in goodness and truth. But we should never let the very success of these sages blind us to the marvel of their achievement. We should never read into Yahweh's primitive character the traits which were only superimposed upon him by a stupendous exertion of moral force on the part of some of the greatest religious geniuses the world ever saw.

A god who could demand the total destruction of every Canaanite city, who could put to the "herem" or ban a Zephath and a Jericho, and punish all Israel because one man had saved a trifle from the "devoted spoil"; a god who could kill Uzzah for simply touching the Ark; who could depose Saul for sparing one man from his host of Amalekite prisoners; who could blaze out into fits of savage wrath against his own chosen people and threaten to slay them all for the offence of a few; such a god is indeed far removed from him who, according to Micah, asked nothing of his worshippers except that they should do judgment, love mercy, and walk humbly.

He seems to have been regarded as coming originally from the mountains and deserts of the South. "God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran", says Habakkuk. The Song of Deborah represents him as marching from Seir, from the field of Edom, to his victory over Sisera. At any rate, as was natural amid a nation that for centuries failed to conquer the plains, he was as much of a mountain-god as of a tribal god—or rather he was both in one. He was conceived as giving laws amid thunder and lightning on a high peak, called by one authority Horeb, by another Sinai. The hills

shake, the crags drop water at his presence. The Syrians were therefore right in believing that the Israelite god was of the hills and not of the valleys (1 Kings xx, 28). But, whether primarily or by accretion, he had also some of the qualities of a tree-deity: for when he wished to encourage David he manifested himself to him by the "sound of a going" in the tops of the mulberries; and he was seen by Moses in a burning bush. In appearance he was, of course, nothing but a magnified and mighty man. This view was in itself a great advance on earlier superstitions, which pictured God in all sorts of hideous and bestial forms. By the time of the first great Hebrew writer, the Judahite historian known as "J", Yahweh is never pictured in a lower form. He walks in the Garden of Eden in the cool of the day, exactly in the fashion of an Eastern potentate strolling in his park after his siesta. He was seen by Moses face to face, and talked with Abraham as to a friend. In more terrible mood he even wrestled with Jacob, or struggled with Levi at Meribah; and both heroes gained great glory from the encounters. Even when he wished to be more terrible yet, and assumed the form of fire or lightning, his human features could still be discerned through the flames. Thus in the thirty-third

chapter of Exodus, "the pillar of cloud descended and talked with Moses"; but a little lower down we are told that Moses saw the face of Yahweh.

Such was the picture of Yahweh as painted in the reign of Jehoshaphat by a man of high religious feeling. In the Northern kingdom, a hundred years later, we find a far less "anthropomorphic" view of Yahweh maintained by men of enlightenment. But the older ideas held sway with most men down to the captivity. Yahweh was a "mighty man", terrible, cruel, to be conciliated by any means available. The blood of rams and goats might sometimes be sufficient; but it was very hard to be certain what he would do next; and his servants were often justly angry with him when they had done their best to please him and failed. At one time, like Chemosh and Milcom, he exacted human sacrifices; but even these did not always secure his favour. To find out his will one had to consult oracles, and try magic tricks with "Urim and Thummim"; but in a fit of caprice he might leave one in the lurch after all.

He was worshipped under all sorts of representative shapes. An "ephod" might stand for him in one place, "teraphim" in another; a rudely carved obelisk on one hill, an "ashērah" or wooden image

(curiously rendered "grove" in the Authorized Version) on the next. He had several names, of which Yahweh was the special one, but "El", the Mighty, "Baal", Lord or Master, might equally be used, especially if the name of the place were added. Thus we have places known as Baalzephon, Baal-Peor, Beth-el, which remind us of Bab-ilu or Babylon (the Gate of El), or of Ashtaroth-Karnaim (the place where the two-horned Astarte was worshipped). Possibly of all his names this Baal was the commonest, for it denoted Yahweh in his *local* aspect, as the tutelary deity of the township, who had simply taken the position previously occupied by the Canaanite divinity of the town, precisely as Our Lady of Embrun or Our Lady of Loches took the place of some Celtic or Teutonic Nerthus or Freyja. Such a Baal was revered at Ophrah, and Gideon was therefore called Jerub-baal. A son of Saul bore the name Ish-baal; a son of Jonathan Merib-baal. Even David dedicated one of his sons to Yahweh under this name, afterwards so hateful to the historians, who resorted to all sorts of devices to hide the truth from themselves and their readers. But we must not forget to notice how, in this very fact that the name Baal was generic or appellative, while Yahweh was single and proper, lay the germs

of future advance. For the Baals were *local*, but Yahweh was coextensive with the nation. Hence an opposition might easily arise between the local deities and the national god; and the victory of Yahweh prepared the way for the recognition of one universal and omnipotent God, as conceived by an Amos or an Isaiah.

War was his chief province; and, if he felt favourably inclined to his nation, it was victorious, exactly as Asshur gave military glory to the kings of Nineveh, or Pallas Athene to Achilles. "Yahweh is a man of war", said "Moses". "He teacheth my hands to war and my fingers to fight", said the Psalmist. He "bends his bow and makes it ready"; when he wishes to make a covenant with Noah, he hangs that bow in the clouds. He is in fact almost always fighting; his special designation is "Yahweh Sabaóth", Yahweh of the Armies; and if the Hebrews had been given to the pictorial arts they would have represented him as some Ares or Odin, except that he would have been on foot, and striding from peak to peak of a mountain-range. It was only when he "went out with the armies" of Israel that Israel was triumphant; and a defeat was due to his desertion. Exactly as Mesha of Moab, in his famous inscription, gives the credit of his victories

to Chemosh, or as Harald of Norway ascribed his triumph at Hafrsfirth to Thor, so did David proclaim that his conquests were solely due to Yahweh. Nor did the god win only by strength. Fraud and craft were equally due to his inspiration. He aided Joshua to draw Ai into a trap, and suggested many a device to David or Joab. Sometimes he deceived his own people, as when he put a lying spirit into the mouths of the prophets to lure Ahab to his death. And yet he could be circumvented by slight accidents. He stood, for instance, in a narrow path, with sword drawn, to kill Balaam. Balaam's ass saw him, and edged off into the wall. The soothsayer escaped with a crushed foot.

Such being the theology of early Israel, we must not be surprised to find in the historical books, despite all the changes made by their various editors, a view of Yahweh very different from that given by the later prophets. The description in the book of Isaiah, of the artificer who takes a block of wood, cuts it about, fashions it into human form, and then falls down and worships it, contrasts very strongly with that offered in earlier books. Micah's mother makes an ephod, a pesél, a massēkah, i. e. graven or molten images, of wood, stone, or gold, and Micah worships them as satisfactory represen-

tations of Yahweh himself, without the slightest idea that he is breaking the law of Moses in doing so; nay, the grandson of Moses acts as his priest, in utter ignorance that in later years the Jews would believe his grandfather to have laid down as his prime command, "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of anything that is in the heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth." The so-called Messenger of Yahweh, i. e. Yahweh in his usual human form, appears to the children of Israel at Bochim; and they sacrifice to him there, knowing nothing of any injunction to the contrary. "Yahweh raises up Ehud", and Ehud commits a not very honourable murder. After the still more dastardly deed of Jael, Deborah cries, "So perish all thine enemies, O Yahweh"—plainly in the belief that such an act, so hateful in our eyes, was as pleasing to her tutelary god as the impalings of captives were to Ashur. Gideon makes an ephod, or image of Yahweh, out of the gold ear-rings of the spoil of Midian; much to the horror of the late historian, who boggles at it deplorably; but, we trust, no longer to our reader's surprise. The "Spirit of Yahweh"—what we might to-day call a Berserker rage—seizes on Jephthah and makes him irresistible in war, but

it does not hinder him from contracting a horrible and fatal vow. The same "Spirit" moves Samson in the camp of Dan; it stirs him to deeds of prodigious strength, but has no moral influence over him whatever. By its force he rends a lion as a priest tears a sacrificial kid; but it does not aid him to control his passions. It is the craft of Yahweh which "seeks an occasion" against the Philistines in Samson's attachment to a Philistine girl; but we to-day are not called upon to admire, or even to excuse, the method by which the "uncircumcised" were cheated. Still less, if possible, are we called on to admire the character of the terrible divinity who, because Saul had slain the Gibeonites, first smote Israel with a three years' famine, and then did not allow himself to be "intreated for the land" until seven men of Saul's sons had been savagely put to death. These tales have vast interest to the student of barbarous superstitions; but they have no more religious or moral value than those which tell how Odysseus foiled Polyphemus or how Achilles sacrificed his prisoners to the shade of Patroclus. To think of them as the deeds of "God" is to be betrayed by the old fallacy of similarity of names; and to palliate the devices of Yahweh is not to save his credit; it is merely to lower our own religion

to the level of a barbarous age. Let us honestly admit what the deeds were by which the Israelites forced their way into Canaan—the deeds of savages, justified to their minds by their supposed conformity to the commands of a God fashioned in their own image. If *we* justify them, "we know not what spirit we are of." Better days came to the Jews; a nobler conception of deity arose among them; and what distinguishes them from other nations is that they were able to evolve out of Yahweh a God worthy to be worshipped by Isaiah—nay, worthy to be claimed by Jesus as his Father.

III

Preliminary Sketch of Israelitish History

It might be argued that as we cannot understand history without knowing about the historian, and cannot understand the historian without knowing the history, the whole subject is hopeless, and truth can never be discovered. Since Jews wrote the story of Judah, and the story of Judah conditioned the mentality of the Jews, where can we begin? Similar difficulties have been raised in other spheres. Since tool A cannot be made without tool B, and tool B cannot be made without tool A, therefore

mankind could never begin to make tools at all. The ancient philosophers delighted in conundrums of this sort.

As a matter of fact, of course, such puzzles are solved *ambulando*. Mankind *has* tools, and it got them by making a very rude one with its hands, and then using the rude one to make a less rude one. Similarly with our historical problem. We cannot decide how far to believe our historians until we know their mentality: we cannot understand their mentality till we know how far their history is true. This also we can solve by forming a preliminary rude idea of their history, from which we can acquire a rude idea of their mental prepossessions: this latter idea will enable us to correct the former, and so on until our historical tool is as perfect as the nature of the case admits. And this is the method we propose to employ. Before proceeding to the direct study of the books, we shall give a provisional account of the circumstances in which the books were composed, and of the general character of the society, out of which they sprang. The actual authors being, with certain very important exceptions, quite unknown, it will be possible to give, so to speak, the biography of their *age* only; and for that purpose an outline study of Jewish his-

tory, especially as it bears on early Jewish literature, is imperative. This may involve a certain amount of repetition when we come to treat the history in more detail; but, if brevity is the soul of wit, repetition is the heart of understanding.

The Jews themselves believed that they came originally from Babylonia, whence their ancestor "Abraham" migrated into Canaan. There is nothing intrinsically improbable in this tradition. If the remarkable narrative given in the fourteenth chapter of Genesis can be relied on, we can approximately fix the date of this migration: for it marks Abraham as the contemporary of "Amraphel king of Shinar", that is, the famous lawgiver Hammurabi, whose code is still extant, and who flourished somewhere about 2000 B. C. The migrating tribes, it would appear, left some of their clans behind them on the upper Euphrates, in a country called Paddan Aram, and the Jews ever afterwards acknowledged their kinship with Aram. A still closer kinship was acknowledged between Israel and the three south-eastern nations, Edom, Moab, and Ammon, which were regarded as having sprung from ancestors very nearly related to Abraham.

After a time, to be reckoned perhaps in centuries, spent in Canaan, during which relations more

or less close were set up with the Hittites and the rulers of Gerar, some part of the tribes went down to Egypt. That *all* did so is not likely; the well-known Egyptian records, called the Tell-el-Amarna tablets, which belong to the period of this sojourn, a period also at which Canaan was under Egyptian over-lordship, speak of Jacob-el and Joseph-el as still in Canaan; and some think that Asher also remained. The immigrants, whether many or few, were apparently welcomed by the dynasty then reigning; and it was not till the extinction of that dynasty and the rise of a new one (the nineteenth), that they were oppressed and put to forced labour. The chief king of this house, Ramses II, was especially tyrannical, and his cruelties became to the Jews a proverb for barbarity. Under Merenptah, in the thirteenth century B. C., deliverance came. A great leader, Moses, arose among the crushed nation; he put himself at their head, revolted, and led his followers out of the country. Merenptah, or one of his generals, pursued them, and overtook them when they were on the edge of an arm of the Red Sea. Escape seemed impossible; but at the critical moment an event occurred which was ever afterwards regarded as a miracle, and which convinced the nation that they

were in a special sense the chosen of Heaven. The sea retired, and allowed them to cross; but just as the Egyptians essayed to follow, a strong wind arose, the sea returned, and the pursuers perished in the waters.

Moses made as yet no attempts to rejoin his kinsfolk in Canaan. His band was comparatively small, and he would have been unable to force his way through the tribes of the border. In particular, a warlike nation, the Philistines, had recently come, perhaps from Crete, and had established itself across the natural route. The tradition gives plain hints that Moses refused to risk a contest with this powerful people. He remained, therefore, in the desert for a long time (the saga says forty years), forming alliances and friendships, which were afterwards to prove of decisive utility to Israel, with the Kenites, the Calebites, the Jerahmeelites, and other desert septs. But after some years, for reasons which remain obscure, the Hebrews advanced towards the Jordan valley. The Amalekites, opposing them, were overthrown. Edom and Ammon, probably because of their kinship, were not assailed. With Moab, then in great danger from Sihon king of Heshbon, an alliance was formed. Fragments of poems still preserved show the dread inspired by

this warlike prince; but he was unable to stand against Israel. He was totally defeated, and his whole people put to the "herem", i. e. devoted to Yahweh and utterly exterminated, man, woman, and child. In his country the Hebrews remained some time. It is said that they added to their territory by the conquest of Bashan, whose king, Og, was the theme of many legendary stories; but in all probability Bashan was not occupied till later.

It is at this point that the saga places the death of Moses. He had done a great work, and was rightly considered the true founder of the nation. To him, therefore, though he probably left not a line behind, it was the custom of the Jews to ascribe the authorship of any laws for which they desired a special sanction.

Heshbon, a small and confined territory, could not long suffice a growing people. To the west of Jordan lay a country which, since the disappearance of the Egyptian suzerainty, was parcelled out among a number of petty cities, warring with each other, and inviting attack by their very wealth and civilization. The rude followers of Yahweh crossed the Jordan under the leadership of a Josephite captain named Hoshea or Joshua. They gained many successes, capturing Jericho, and overthrowing at

Bethhoron a league of the southern Canaanites. Joseph, indeed, was able to establish itself firmly in the central regions. The other tribes were less successful, especially in the south-west. Simeon and Levi were totally destroyed; the former disappears from history and the latter only survived as the name of a priestly caste. Judah would have shared their fate, but for an alliance with the desert septs of Caleb and Jerahmeel. Dan made a few precarious conquests to the south; but a large part of the clan migrated to the far north, and found an easier prey in the unwarlike inhabitants of Laish.

Thenceforward, the history of Israel is that of isolated clans, established in the hill country, and gradually encroaching upon the plains. New tribes, probably of very mixed origin, such as Zebulun and Naphtali, gained a victory over the northern towns at Kedesh, under the leadership of Barak. A powerful branch of Joseph, the clan of Machir, passed back to the east of Jordan, and occupied (or reoccupied) Bashan. The chief obstacle to expansion was found in the Philistines of the south-west. This young and energetic nation, firmly based on five strong cities, pressed back the Hebrews, and finally reduced Judah to tribute. Encouraged by this success, they carried their arms further north,

and even alarmed Joseph. From the east, also, Ammon began to threaten danger. Israel, like other nations before and since, found herself obliged to sacrifice local liberty to the necessity of war. Saul, a powerful chieftain of the new border-clan of Benjamin, was chosen king; and men ceased "to do that which was right in their own eyes".

Saul proved an energetic and successful ruler. Ammon was defeated, and the Hebrew outpost of Jabesh-Gilead was relieved from attack. Against Philistia he fought with varying fortune, but always with skill and bravery, until, in a last combined and desperate assault of the whole Philistine confederation, he fell with three of his sons in the fatal battle of Mount Gilboa. This terrible disaster, one of the few sustained by Israel on the heights, seemed to the stricken nation a proof that Yahweh, their mountain-god, had seen some neglect in the house of Saul; and it coloured the whole subsequent view of the defeated house. Israel abandoned Saul, and looked elsewhere for help. Nor was that help far to seek. David, a chieftain of Judah, had for some time been a vassal of the Philistines, and was apparently maintained by them after Gilboa. Doubtless they hoped, by playing on the jealousy between Judah and Joseph, to keep their sway over

all Israel. But their hopes were disappointed. The few supporters of the house of Saul, finding Ish-baal, Saul's son, a feeble and irresolute ruler, speedily came over to the able and energetic David, who had, indeed, all the gifts of a Robert Bruce, and contrasted very strongly with the contemptible Saulite Balliol. Finally, Abner, Ish-baal's general, abandoned his kinsman; Ish-baal was murdered, and "all Israel" took David to father and lord. Meanwhile, the Philistines themselves, it would seem, had suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of Egypt. David threw off his allegiance to the broken Power, and began that brilliant reign to which the later Jews always looked back as to a golden age.

The external history of Palestine was decided by its position as holding the only trade-route between the two great civilizations of the ancient world, those of the Nile and of the Euphrates. It was, as a rule, controlled by one or other of them; but when both were weak it could assert itself. Such a moment had now arrived. Egypt did not wish to assert sovereignty, and Mesopotamia was as yet unable. David was therefore in a position to pass from vassalage to independence, and from independence to conquest. It is now that we find the true absorption of Canaan beginning—an absorption in which,

it is true, the vanquished led captive the victors. For the Canaanites, vastly more civilized than the Hebrews, taught their arts and their religion to their conquerors, as Greece afterwards taught Rome. The greatness of the house of David is shown by the way in which it adopted the culture of its vassals. Jerusalem was taken from the Jebusites, and made the capital of the new kingdom; the plains were occupied; chariots and cavalry appear for the first time in the armies—a sure sign that Yahweh was descending into the valleys. Vast conquests were made abroad; and for a generation it seemed as if this house might consolidate a powerful Middle Kingdom, stretching from Damascus to the Red Sea, and from the Levant to the Euphrates.

But for this consummation the means were wanting. The most powerful tribe, that of Joseph, still resented the superiority of Judah; and David's son, Solomon, though a great diplomatist, was too oppressive in his *corvées* and his exactions of tribute to have a chance of reconciling Joseph with Judah. On his death, the kingdom fell to pieces. Rehoboam endeavoured to reunite it by force; but his power was crushed by Shishak of Egypt, who doubtless preferred a disorganized neighbour to such a kingdom as David had planned; and for the next two

hundred years the chief power in the land belonged to Joseph, which, though able to reduce Judah to vassalage, could never restore the empire of Solomon. Two main northern sanctuaries, at Bethel and at Dan, marked the severance of northern worship from that of the south.

It is at this point that literature proper begins. So far, oral tradition, collections of songs like the *Book of Jashar,* genealogies, tales like that of Samson, had been almost the sole historical pabulum of the race. A short ritual code, fragmentarily preserved for us in Exodus, probably already existed in writing; but we now see a band of Judæan chroniclers, known to us compendiously as "J", who endeavoured to collect the traditions, local, national, and legal, into one work. This work, of course, assumed the primacy of Judah among the tribes, and gave Joseph but a secondary place: the sacred spots, hallowed by memories of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, are almost always in the south, and the tone is throughout southern. Beginning with the legends as to the origin of the world, J carried the story down to the time of David, always with this patriotic underlying feeling. Saul, for example, was somewhat depreciated, the house of his rival exalted, and the worship of the Golden

Calves at Bethel prophetically censured, as one which Moses, the prime lawgiver, had ruled out from the first. As time went on, it is probable that this work—one of the greatest pieces of narrative ever written—received accretions, continuing the story in the manner of the Old English Chronicle. Parts of this work are preserved for us in the *Hexateuch,* and even, as some think, in Judges, Samuel, and Kings.

In the North, a different movement arose. This was what is known as the Pre-prophetic propaganda, which aimed at crushing out, by any means, the local cults of the Baals, and the substitution for them of Yahweh as the single national god. On one side this movement certainly made for progress; but on another it was reactionary and mischievous, for it represented the narrow Yahwism of the conquest days, and meant the destruction of the growing harmony of Canaanite and Israelite, on which the safety of the realm depended. Moreover, it ran counter to the system of foreign alliance, especially that with Tyre, which was the nerve-centre of the policy of the reigning dynasty. On these grounds it was opposed by the kings and politicians of the time. Nevertheless, after many vicissitudes, it gained a signal triumph. Led by two great but

ruthless men, Elijah and his pupil Elisha, the Dominics and Torquemadas of the age, this new-old party overthrew the Baalite dynasty, and put in its place a military adventurer who, by trickery and murder on a frightful scale, utterly wiped out the foreign Baals and their worshippers. Of the new house Elisha was the trusted adviser and oracle; and for a time the movement appeared justified by success. Under Jeroboam II, the greatgrandson of the usurper, Israel seemed rejuvenated: in a long reign of forty-one years this king achieved a brilliant series of military triumphs, and indeed all but restored the old Middle Kingdom.

Men cannot help judging by the event. Even in our own time we have seen philosophies dominant or discredited according to the degree of military prosperity which has attended them. Hence one is not surprised that the triumphs of Jeroboam were ascribed to the favour of Yahweh, due to the adoption of Pre-prophetism. Nevertheless, this very prosperity provoked a reaction. For a band of enlightened men, who, though by no means wishful to re-establish the Baals, yet detested the savagery with which Baalism had been put down, and still more the luxurious tyranny of the great families that supported Jeroboam, now began to proclaim

a new and better religion. Yahweh was not a national god, but the God of Heaven and of all the earth; he took no pleasure in war or bloodshed, but in righteousness and mercy; nor did he care for the sacrifices on which the allied royal and priestly castes flourished, but for simple truth and honesty. In the midst of all Jeroboam's triumphs, these new Prophets, represented to us by Amos and Hosea, foresaw disaster. Their forebodings were fulfilled. Jeroboam died in 745. In 722 his kingdom was overthrown for ever by the power of Assyria.

It was from this Prophetic school that sprang the northern historical work, known as "E", which, covering much the same ground as J, treats it very differently. In E, Joseph inevitably takes the place of leader in Israel; but—what is of more importance—the conception of Yahweh (whose name is not used) assumes a far higher form than in J. He is, in fact, a truly divine Being, very unlike J's magnified man. The ideas of Amos and Hosea are visible throughout this book, which, while lacking the picturesque beauty of J, stands thus on a loftier religious plane. Most fortunately, the work was not lost when Samaria fell, but, saved as a brand from the burning, was carried south and incorporated with J into a single history, now known as JE. In

the opinion of many, fragments of E may still be detected even in the Book of Judges.

From the fate of Samaria, Judah was saved by its position. It stood aside from the great route between Assyria and Egypt, and Jerusalem, compassed with mountains, was impregnable to any attack not made from all sides at once. Hence the southern kingdom survived its greater neighbour by a century and a half; and the Yahwistic religion, though strongly tinged with northern influences, survived in a mainly southern form. The leader in the movement which secured this survival was the great prophet Isaiah, perhaps the loftiest genius of the whole Israelite race. Learning much from Amos and Hosea, he added decisive elements of his own; and the impulse he gave was wonderfully lasting. During the subsequent years, a great transformation took place in the religious thought of Judah. New codes were added to the older ones. Already J had substituted our present Commandments for the original Ten Words of the ritual; but these years saw the appearance of the so-called Law of Holiness; and constant redactions of JE made tradition more and more subservient to theology. The old religion, with its admission of local and foreign cults, put forth a last desperate

effort under Manasseh; but nothing could check the rising tide. By Josiah the whole ancient worship was swept away. In his reign a religious romance was published, in which the new views were maintained to be old, and indeed to be Mosaism pure and simple. This work, now called Deuteronomy, is distinguished by the stress it lays on the utter rejection of all rival cults as a *sine qua non* of success in war and politics. Josiah adopted it whole as his directory of action, and carried out its injunctions with something of Elijah's ruthless thoroughness.

Under the influence of Deuteronomism the old histories were once more revised—luckily for us not so thoroughly as to annihilate all traces of the past. Judges, for example, was edited by a Deuteronomist; but his method, in the main, was but to issue the old matter with a Deuteronomic commentary. This is the central portion of the book as we have it to-day.

A terrible blow befell Deuteronomism when Josiah, its great exponent, fell in battle with Pharaoh Necho of Egypt at Megiddo in 608. Reaction began at once, and the defeated school looked upon Megiddo as the type of combined religious and national disaster: so much so, indeed, that the name

was used centuries later by Apocalyptic writers to represent the coming battle between God and Satan (Rev. xvi, 16). But Jeremiah, the prophetic leader of the movement, kept the flag flying. Politically, the reactionaries were identified with an Egyptian alliance: against this alliance Jeremiah set his face like a flint. For the time being he failed; but the result was as he had foreseen. Egypt proved a broken reed: the new Eastern Power, Babylon, which had taken the place of Assyria, overwhelmed Necho at Carchemish; and finally, in 586, took Jerusalem and carried the Jews away into captivity.

The exile, involving as it did the overthrow of polytheism, made certain the victory of the Deuteronomic movement in some form: and that victory was still further secured by an alliance, now imperative, between prophet and priest. Hitherto the prophets had shown no affection for the priests: and Amos had been the deadly foe of an Amaziah; but now, with the destruction of the altars, the two rivals came together. Ezekiel, for example, is at least as much priest as prophet; and his work was largely to increase the priestly influence. Psalmists and hymn-writers, depending on synagogues for their vogue, aided the work. On the return from exile, the literature was yet again edited. JE, with

the Deuteronomic and "Holiness" accretions, was taken in hand, and a new Priestly Code was added to the whole: while a priestly summary of the history, including a system of dates and a re-reading of it in a sacerdotal sense, was superimposed upon it. It is to this priestly work ("P") that we owe the first chapter of Genesis, written to glorify the institution of the Sabbath, and the seventeenth, written to give the sanction of Abrahamic usage to circumcision. Even Judges, which it might have been thought had been redacted enough already, received a few of these priestly touches. Still later, the author of Chronicles, working on the older Books of Kings, re-wrote the history from the point of view of a professional member of the Temple staff; but his work is almost destitute of historical value, and found indeed great difficulty in securing even the last place among the sacred writings.

We thus see the kind of work we have to deal with in the "Hexateuch," Judges, and other Old Testament histories. They are not the composition of one man, nor of one age; and they are scarcely, in the modern sense of the word, histories at all. But they are, in their own kind, works of immense interest and worth. They preserve a number of traditions, remarkably true to life and human na-

ture, which would otherwise have been lost; and they are a witness all the more valuable because unconscious, to the history of the men who wrote them. To insist on their inspiration, in the old sense of that word, is to refuse to the books precisely that utility which they really possess, and to deprive us, the readers, of the true advantage we can gain from their study.

IV

The Composite Character of the Books

It is probable that hardly a single book in the whole Old Testament is free from considerable additions and interpolations, made at different times; and occasionally, as in the book we call Isaiah, the work of the original author forms but a small portion of the book as we have it now. Not only are the whole of the last twenty-seven chapters later by a hundred and fifty years than Isaiah, but many of the first thirty-nine are demonstrably, whatever their date, by different authors. The Hexateuch, again, is a "traditional" book, enlarged and altered during at least three hundred years. Sometimes, indeed, we are lucky enough to be able to trace this process with great clearness, as if it were going on

before our eyes. That curious work, the Book of Esther, for example, has been enlarged by copyists, translators, and commentators into nearly double its former size; but the additions never got into the Hebrew text. They are to be found in the Greek translation and in the "Targums" or paraphrases of Jewish scholars. Had these been incorporated in the Hebrew, we should have had to solve the very problem presented by most of the Old Testament books; and the separation of the different strata, which is now so easy, would have been a matter of great difficulty.

Our historical books, in their measure, present a similar difficulty. They are all composite; and, in some cases, the disentangling process is difficult indeed. No one, for instance, can fail to see the contradictions and duplications in the Books of Samuel. A glance at the story of David and Goliath (chapters xvi and xviii) is sufficient for anyone: to say nothing of the fact that the author of 2 Samuel xxi, 19, rejected the whole story, and believed that Goliath was really killed by "Elhanan the Bethlehemite". Yet, as we have said, no scholar can fix with confidence, throughout the books, the points where one writer leaves off and another begins.

Were such books produced to-day, the editors would be expected to mark their sources by all sorts of typographical devices. We should see what we see in Croker's edition of Boswell—footnotes, appendices, italics, inverted commas, headlines, with at least initials to show which is Boswellian and which is editorial. None of these devices were known to ancient copyists; and hence we find, in our Bibles, the most incongruous jumbles of narrative, running on in the same text and type, and now requiring for their unravelling the utmost care and tact.

As it is impossible to understand the Old Testament rightly without some knowledge of the treatment the books have received before reaching their present state, I propose here to give a brief analysis of the Book of Judges; choosing that book because the solution of its problems, though not always certain, is usually simpler than the solution of corresponding problems elsewhere; and secondly, because "Judges" seems to me to present these problems in a more typical form than any other book. The most casual perusal is enough to show that it is in a confused and disorderly condition. Let the reader, for instance, glance at the twentieth chapter. The jumble is like that in the double narrative

of the Flood in the early narratives of Genesis; more difficult to put straight, but equally obvious. We have here two quite separate accounts of the Benjamite defeat, inconsistent yet parallel; but in our ordinary Bibles, to the destruction of clearness, they are printed continuously, as if they were as single and straightforward as Macaulay's account of the Boyne; with no change of type or other indication of any kind to show difference of source. They are in fact a chaos, "confusion worse confounded"; and that this is not usually noticed is due to the fact that the Bible, being treated as sacrosanct, is generally read as if it had no meaning at all. Before they can be appreciated, an attempt must be made to set them out separately. The same thing is the case with the story of Micah and with that of Gideon; while there is reason to believe that the story of Abimelech in chapter ix has not entirely escaped the same fate. *But something like it has occurred throughout the whole book;* and we must be always on the look-out for it, or we shall fail to understand what we read.

These few examples are sufficient to show that Judges is *a composite work:* and, before we can make any real progress in its study, we must at least dissect it into its *main* constituent parts, reserving

smaller points for later discussion. And here, fortunately, there can be no doubt in the minds of any who read with a modicum of care. The *main* part is the stretch from ii, 6, to xvi, 31. This, when allowance is made for certain important reservations, may be said to form a fairly continuous narrative, marked by one clear idea running through the whole; an idea not only emphasized in the preface, but reiterated at every convenient interval in the story. Those who have read our Introduction so far will have no difficulty in characterizing the author (or rather the *editor*) of this portion of the book. He is a Deuteronomist through and through, and can be mistaken for nobody else. But observe that (as a rule) the tales themselves are not in his style: they prove on examination to be almost verbatim transcripts from a previous writer, whose characteristics are now those of E, now those of J, now obscure; but *never* Deuteronomic. Let us call the Deuteronomist "D", and the earlier writer, for the present, "A."

Prefixed to D is a quite independent passage, containing a very brief account of the conquest of Canaan by the Israelites. In style and content this differs *toto caelo* from the central work. Examination shows that, while giving an entirely differ-

ent picture of the Conquest from that exhibited by the Book of Joshua as a whole, it has a very close connection with certain passages in that book; and the conclusion reached by many scholars is that it is an abridgment of certain chapters of a work by that admirable writer "J", of whom we have already spoken. Traces of J can be found in nearly all the historical books of the Old Testament; and it is probable that the passages in question, both in Joshua and in Judges, are excerpts from J, more or less shortened. J is a story-teller of the very highest rank, worthy to be compared with Herodotus or the great Icelandic saga-men; and he was, in the sense we have explained above, an honest and truthful writer. To recognize his merits, it is enough to say that we owe to him the best portions of the story of Joseph, and the wonderful picture, in Genesis xviii, of the visit of the Three Men to Abraham. His account of the conquest here given, though so tantalizingly brief, is of the utmost value: it enables us to correct the very imaginative story given by Joshua as we now have it.

But this is not all. Chapters xvii to xxi of Judges contain a couple of appendices to the main narra-

tive. The tales here told have not a touch of the Deuteronomist about them; not one of his phrases about "the children of Israel doing evil in the eyes of Yahweh"; not a word about his "selling them into the hand" of a conqueror; but the simple *excuse*, "Then was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes." As we look closer, we see that the story of Micah, at least, has many points of resemblance to the *stories* copied by D from A; and there is no reason why it should not be taken as a part of A's original work. A later editor than D, happily for us, reinserted it, though out of its chronological order. The tale of Gibeah, *in an earlier shape*, may also have been the work of A; but, as we have it, it has been rewritten by a man of much later date, without much historic sense. This man had access to two sources of the tale; he has bundled both together, and apparently added something inferior of his own.

We arrive thus at the following, entirely rough and preliminary, plan of the book:—

1. Chapter i–ii, 5. J, abridged.

2. ii, 6–xvi, 31. D, who copies A for the tales, but gives them a new setting, derived from the "Deuteronomic" thought of his own age and party.

3. (*a*) xvii, xviii. A.

3. (*b*) xix–xxi. Originally A, but with alterations and accretions.

But, as we read more carefully, even in the English versions, we become conscious that not one of these divisions has come to us as its author wrote it. At least one editor (and probably several editors) has left his mark on every one.

1. i–ii, 5. Even in this passage, short as it is, there has been editing. The tale of the capture of Jerusalem (i, 8) is not only false—a fact which by itself would make J's authorship of it unlikely—but is directly contradicted by verse 21 of this very chapter, which, again, to judge from the parallel verse in Joshua, must have suffered alteration. Further, the story of Bochim (ii, 1–ii, 5) is almost certainly a substitution for something different in the original J-narrative. Other and slighter editorial touches are pointed out by the commentators.

2. ii–xvi. In these chapters, also, there are parts that cannot be ascribed either to D or to A. One such is the doubled narrative of Gideon, which, indeed, D may have accepted from his authority, but which cannot have been in the *original* form of A. A second, of greater importance, is the whole story of Abimelech in chapter ix, the setting of

which is different from that of D. (Verses 56, 57 are a *prophetic* comment, suitable to the thought of Amos or Hosea, but not in the least Deuteronomic.) Chapter ix, then, may well belong to A; but here again there are parts, added from another source, which are perhaps due to the researches of a late editor. And, thirdly, the table of the Minor Judges can scarcely be by D, though it, also, may be A's. We need not notice here the fifth chapter, which is all but confessedly an extract from an old collection of songs, and is indeed by far the most ancient part of the whole Book of Judges.

3. (*a*) xvii–xviii. There is every reason to hold that the story of Micah is double. It is impossible to believe that A wrote it in this confused form. The confusion is due to some editor who, having access to the tale in another book, added passages from that book, in clumsy fashion, to A's work.

3. (*b*) xix–xxi. The tale of Gibeah, as we have seen, is also composite: but its form, as it was left by A, is exceedingly hard to disinter from the mass of accretion that has covered it, at the hands of at least one editor, and perhaps of two editors.

Whether D, in working over the previous history, found it in its present confused and often doubled state, is hard to decide. But on the whole

it seems probable that A (the book as D found it) consisted *already* of fragments of J and E, both of whom may well have written a history of the period. This, like the rest of their work, was combined into a "JE", which it is an interesting problem to analyse into its original components.

Of the tiny editorial touches (notes, "glosses", comments, and the like), varying in date and value, which can be observed at intervals throughout the whole book, this is hardly the place to speak. They will be visible to any careful reader.

We might form some idea of the character of Judges if we were to imagine Livy to have written his first two Books by simply excerpting Fabius Pictor and other ancient authorities, inserting an old song or two on the battle of Regillus or the feat of Horatius, and adding comments of his own. An editor alters Livy's order, adds parallel passages from Dionysius or another, and indulges in moral remarks of *his* own on the characters of Romulus or Tarquin. A second editor adds more notes, and modernizes here and there. Finally, in later times, the whole jumble is printed, without variation of type, precisely as it left the last owner's hands. Even an English reader would be able to make an approximation to the right solution of the prob-

lem; a Latin scholar would get nearer; but unfortunately, many problems would be beyond the highest scholarship and the keenest ingenuity.

V

The Play upon Words

Every reader of the Bible recognizes the vast importance which the Hebrew nation attached to words and names. The prophets, for example, gave to their children names like Maher-shalalhash-baz, and others equally astonishing, which had, or were meant to have, an influence over events. Trivial incidents, like the mention of laughter by Sarah, lead to the giving of a name like Isaac to the child that is born soon afterwards. "Jacob", says Esau, "is rightly called the Supplanter, for he has supplanted me repeatedly."

To the Jews, as to almost all nations in certain stages of their development, the word or the name, once let loose, was an independent entity, with a life of its own: it was, as Homer called it, "winged"; as the author of Ecclesiastes called it, "a bird of the air." Mere accidents, mere puns, which the word or the name happened to carry,

were thus part of its fated content, and bore their share in the development of events. A sentence might have been uttered with one meaning; but if it chanced to be capable of bearing another, then the gods might well apply it in that second sense. The oracles of Delphi were generally ambiguous, and if they failed in one meaning, fulfilled themselves in another. A Roman general is thinking of going on an expedition. A fig-seller close by cries "Dried Figs" (*cauneas*), which is heard by the soldiers as *caue ne eas* (Beware of going); and the unlucky words become an omen of disaster.

But, while the word or the name had thus an independent existence, there remained a mystic identity between the name and the person. It is hard, for example, to distinguish between the name of Yahweh and Yahweh himself; and there can be little doubt that, when Jacob asked for the name of his divine opponent, he meant in some fashion to seize the person himself thereby. Conversely, when at some crisis the man suffered a change, as did Jacob at this very contest, his name must be changed with him. Thus Abram becomes Abraham, Sarai, Sarah, and Jacob, Israel. Esau comes in faint from the hunting, and sees his brother seething pottage. "Give me some of that red, that red

there!" cried he; "and therefore was his name called Edom or Red," says the historian. But this principle admits of extensions which to us seem to pass the border of superstition. By attaching a name to a man, you could restrict him or enlarge him, bless him or curse him; and a slight twist to his original name would effect the same purpose. In this connection a rhyme, an assonance, or the most trivial of puns, seemed to the Jews a fact charged with significance. When John of Gaunt plays nicely with his name, there is an intense pathos in the last words of the old man, "gaunt as the grave, gaunt for the grave"; but there is nothing more than pathos. When Jenner, the commissioner sent down by James II to depose Hough from the Presidency of Magdalen, said, "Do not think to huff us," he was but adding point to insolence. But to the Jews such a pun would have appeared as endowed with actual force and vitality. Thus, by altering the name Beelzebub to *Beelzebul*, they fancied they could really turn him into a "god of dirt." In similar wise, Hezekiah deprived the brazen serpent of all its power by a slight change of nomenclature: he called it, not *nahash* (serpent) but *nehushtan* (a piece of brass).

It is, as might be expected, in the ancient tradi-

tions preserved in the Book of Genesis that the power of the pun is most fully exhibited. In almost every chapter we find some word-play or other; and the author searches for and discovers all sorts of symbolic quibbles where most people would renounce the quest in despair. He was not incommoded by narrow views of history. When a modern prince is called Victor Emmanuel we wish to know why he was *actually* called so. But in the case of a Noah the writer of Genesis knows why he was *symbolically* called so—to *comfort* his parents for the toil of their hands. In chapter iii there is a play on the words *Adam* (man) and *Adamah* (earth): while, though the name *Eden* is really Babylonian, and signifies simply plain or meadow, the author obviously never forgets that to a Hebrew it would convey the notion of a "garden of delight." Similarly, in iii, 20, the name Eve is not Hebrew; but the writer is not content till he has found a Hebrew significance for it—one probably far removed from that which it originally bore.

It is needless to multiply instances. Cain, perhaps *smith* or *worker in metals,* is "derived" from *kanah,* to acquire, with which it has nothing to do; Babel means the *Gate of God,* but in chapter xi it is connected with the Hebrew word for confusion; much

as the Greeks turned the *Bozrah,* or citadel of Carthage, into *Byrsa* an ox-hide, and invented a tale to account for the name. In chapter xxix one set of derivations is given for the names of the twelve sons of Jacob, and in chapter xlix another. Again, when Jacob was trying his tricks upon Laban, whose name means *white,* it was with some idea of the magic effect of the name that he "took him rods of fresh poplar (the Hebrew word for which closely resembles Laban) and peeled *white* strakes in them, and made the white appear which was in the rods".

The tendency appears much later among the Jews. Thus Amos (viii, 1) tells us how the Lord God showed him a basket of summer-fruit (kayits). "And the Lord said, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, *Kayits.* Then said he, An end (kets) is come upon my people Israel." Again, Isaiah, in the finale of that splendid denunciation called the Song of the Vineyard (ch. v), points his indignation with a magnificent paronomasia: "He looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry." "He looked for *mishpat,* but behold *mispakh;* for *tsedakah,* but behold *tse'akah.*"

Needless to say, the Book of Judges provides us

with plenty of examples of the same propensity. We are told, for instance, that *Cushan Rishathaim* was a great oppressor of the Chosen People. This is a name otherwise unknown, and exceedingly difficult; the reason being that the patriotic author could not resist the temptation to alter the original, whatever it was, into a peculiar Hebrew dual, which would suggest to Jewish ears something like "Caushite of double-dyed wickedness", or "a son of Ham (Gen. x, 6), with twice his father's dose of original sin". Similarly, the author of the ninth chapter has apparently substituted "Gaal the son of *Ebed*" (a slave) for "Gaal the son of *Obed*". Gaal being a Canaanite, the writer would remember that Canaan was to be "Ebed Abadim", a servant of servants, to his brethren (Gen. ix, 25). Much in the same way the author of Genesis xiv represents the names of the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah as being Bera and Birsha (evil and wickedness); whether inventing them or altering them from similar but real names, we can only guess; and either Isaiah or a copyist has twisted the name of a Syrian monarch into Tob-al, Good-for-nothing (Isa. vii, 6).

It would be a different impulse that led the historian to give us his strange derivation of Jerub-

baal (Gideon) as "Adversary of Baal"; he did not know that in early days Baal meant simply God, and that the name really means "God founds". When, at the time of the introduction of Canaanite and Sidonian Baals into Israel, it became necessary to distinguish between Baal and Yahweh, the author naturally sought a new significance for the name of his hero. But he is always in pursuit of etymologies, and generally hits on a false one: "Ramath Lehi" (xv, 17) does *not* mean "the throwing of the jaw-bone", but the Hill of Lehi; "En Hakkore" (verse 19) is not the "Spring of the Caller" but Partridge Spring; nor is it at all certain that "Bochim" (ii, 5) really means Weepers. But we must not judge him as we should judge a writer of the present day who indulged in such vagaries; to him a false derivation, even though known to be false, has as much importance as the true.

It is unnecessary to point out that the pun, like the rhyme, adds force to folk-verses and jingles, and assists their retention in the popular memory. In this respect it is as much in vogue to-day as it was three or four thousand years ago; but it would be hard to find a completer or more vigorous example, even now, than the one which Samson used to emphasize his triumph over the Philistines:

"Bilekhi ha-khamor khamor khamor athain;
Bilekhi ha-khamor hicchethi eleph ish."

True, the Philistines had their repartee, in which the rhyme retorted on the paronomasia. When they captured *him,* their triumph-song consisted of a rhyme five times repeated, which may perhaps be represented somewhat in this fashion:—

"For so our foe that laid us low,
And wrought us woe, is made a show."

The song of Deborah is far more dignified than Samson's ditty; but it, too, has its play on words. That oldest, and almost finest, of Hebrew battle-songs clinches its magnificent stanzas by a fine contrast at the end between *ayab,* to hate, and *ahab,* to love. Milton, then, had good authority behind him when, in his picture of the war of the angels, he allows those sublime beings to play with words, and point their antagonisms with puns.

VI

Chronology

The dates of early Bible history, as is natural, are loose and inexact; and it is not till the Jews came into contact with more civilized nations that

their chronology puts on any sort of precision. That of Genesis, as is well-known, is the mere invention of the priestly compiler known as P, and is entirely without value. If we could rely on the fourteenth chapter, we might obtain an approximate date for Abraham; for he is there represented as contemporary with the famous lawgiver Hammurabi of Babylon, and therefore as alive about 2100 B. C.; but grave doubts have been thrown on the trustworthiness of that chapter. Be it trustworthy or not, we have nothing else to go on until we come to the Exodus, which, if Merenptah was the Pharaoh concerned, must be about 1300 B. C. Now, in I Kings vi, 1, we are told that the foundation of Solomon's Temple was 480 years after the Exodus. Were this correct, we should find our task much simplified; but it is consistent neither with other indications in the Old Testament nor with what we can gather from external sources. For the years marked in Judges alone amount to four hundred and ten years; and to these must be added the forty years in the wilderness, the last years of Joshua and his generation (Judges ii, 10), some time for Eli and Samuel, and the reigns of Saul and David. The numbers actually given amount to 534, and those not given can scarcely be less than sixty

or eighty. All sorts of attempts at reconciliation have been made: the usual idea being that some of the Judges may have been contemporary with others. None of these attempts are satisfactory; nor indeed is the question important, for it is plain at a glance that the chronology of our authors is merely guesswork: and when we find that the same number, 480, is given for the period from Solomon to the end of the Captivity, the thing becomes plainer still. The 480 years of Kings are merely twelve generations, reckoned at forty years each: the majority of the judges give "rest" for forty or eighty years; David reigns forty, Solomon another forty. Even the Minor Judges "rule" for 76 years, and these, added to the four of Solomon (before the foundation of the Temple) make another 80. There is no need to trouble to put right such a system as this.

But we are not left entirely without light. If, with the majority of scholars, we believe that the king of Israel who fought against Shalmaneser II at Karkar was the famous Ahab, we find Ahab alive in 854: and if we can assume the approximate correctness of the numbers assigned to the kings of Israel after the Disruption, we may place the begin-

ning of Rehoboam's reign about 933.[1] Assume further a hundred years or so, and Saul would begin to reign about 1033. Give Eli and Samuel roughly sixty years, and we reach, as the date of the later Judges, *about* 1100. Thus the events of Joshua and Judges are to be included in the two hundred years between 1300 and 1100. They would thus be fairly contemporary with the Trojan War.

After 854 we are on firmer ground; and the dates of "Kings" corrected where necessary by Assyrian and Babylonian records, enable us to date our history with considerable exactness.

VII

Hebrew Modes of Speech

Every language has its peculiarities and idioms, which tend to deceive those who unwarily come to it from the habitual use of a different style. The Frenchman, for example, exaggerates what the Englishman attenuates, and makes light of what to us is important. Care, then, is needed in reading French authors, lest we should attach too much

[1] Rehoboam was contemporary with Sheshonk, king of Egypt: the date 933 is not more than a few years out by Egyptian chronology.

weight to this point, or too little to the other. But if this is the case with a language so near to ours as the French, much more is it the case with one so far off from us as the Hebrew, the whole basis of which is a kind of thought totally alien to our own.

It is, of course, impossible here to exhibit a hundredth part of these idiosyncrasies. But we may profitably dwell for a few lines on two characteristics of Hebrew writers, the neglect of which has caused in the past an unfortunate misunderstanding of the meaning not only of Biblical poetry, but of Biblical prose; and a knowledge of which is desirable before commencing the study of the smallest part of Scripture.

The first of these is Oriental hyperbole. This figure, of course, is only too common in all nations and at all times; it has, in fact, been employed so often as to produce less effect the more it is strained. We all know what to think of a statement such as: "He ran past like a streak of greased lightning." But we may easily be deceived when, as in reading the Bible, we meet an hyperbole in a strange form and in unknown collocations. Thus, for example, we are inclined to take at their face-value the Oriental expressions of homage or politeness—"Thy people are my people"; "Take the piece

of ground for nothing"; "I am the least in my clan, and my clan is the least in Israel"; "After whom is my Lord the king come out? after a dead dog, after a lonely flea"; "We were in our own sight as grasshoppers"; none of which were meant to be accepted with any approach to literality. It is only when we realize this Oriental floridity that we are in a position to understand many of our Lord's sayings, which, being addressed to Hebrews, clothe themselves in Hebrew garb. Such are: "No man can follow me who *hateth not* his father and mother"; "If a man smite thee on one cheek, turn to him the other also"; "It is *easier* for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

But still more subtle, and still more deceptive, is what we may call the Hebrew conception of identity—a conception which will be best understood after we have given a few examples. So alien to our way of thought is it that in a very large number of cases the translators have shirked it by the use of such words as *like, as, for, resembles.* To the ancient Hebrew, as to the modern Arab, almost any relation was expressed by the simple *is* or *are.* "The vale of Siddim *was* slime-pits"; "I *am* peace"; "We *are* but yesterday"; "The whole earth *was* one lan-

guage and one speech"; nay, even "Is not God the height of heaven?" or "I am prayer";—all these are but a few instances taken at random to illustrate this Hebrew form of thought. After them, we shall be able to appreciate "All thy garments are myrrh"; "Thine eyes are doves"; "Thy name is ointment poured forth", or the yet more curious expression "waters, knees" for "waters reaching to the knees". In every one of these cases the English versions have toned these strong metaphors down into the flat similes or feeble circumlocutions which to us seem more natural: "The vale was *full of* slime-pits"; "I am *for* peace"; "I *give myself unto* prayer"; "Thy garments *smell of* myrrh"; "Is not God *in* the height of heaven?" But we must always be ready to notice the idiom and to make allowance for it. And here again the language of our Lord is likely to mislead us unless we are on our guard. At times, of course, error is impossible. No one can take literally such phrases as "I am the true Vine", "I am the Door", but there are many others, and some indeed on which vast structures of theological dogma have been built, that are probably to be explained by reference to this Oriental fashion of seeing an identity where we colder Westerners see at best a likeness.

HISTORY

CHAPTER I

Moses

Although the Hebrew traditions spoke, and probably with truth, of an original home in Chaldea and of early sojournings in Palestine, it is scarcely possible to begin the history before the time of Moses. "Abraham", the father of the race, may possibly have entered the land of Promise about 2000 B. C., and alliances may have been made with Gerar and with the Hittites. Small settlements, it would seem, were actually made in the country, and certain tribes probably remained there for centuries. But we hear of no fewer than three migrations to Egypt on the part of at least some of the tribes; and it is there that the story really commences. For a century or two they carried on their occupations in freedom and peace, until the rise of a new dynasty altered their condition. Ramses the Second, who "knew not Joseph," endeavoured to compel them to uncongenial tasks, subjected them

to forced labour, and used them in the building of his cities. This oppression was never forgotten by the Hebrews; they groaned under the task-master, and waited eagerly for a chance of throwing off the yoke. After the death of Ramses the chance came: a great leader named Moses appeared, who not only strengthened them in their resistance to the oppressor, but, like an earlier Mohammed, filled their minds with religious hopes. During their exile in Egypt they had all but forgotten their national god, whose home was in the deserts of Arabia. Moses persuaded them to leave the land of Goshen, and to seek their deity at Kadesh. Pharaoh refused to grant permission; but, on a night ever afterwards held sacred, they broke up their settlements and started. The king pursued them, and compelled them to turn their course from east to south, finally overtaking them on the Egyptian shore of a branch of the "Sea of Reeds".[1] Here took place an incident which, embellished by tradition, marked ever afterwards the chief epoch in Jewish history. A high wind enabled the Israelites to pass the sea, which returning just as they had crossed, overwhelmed the Egyptian chariots and horsemen. Long afterwards, a song, ascribed to Moses himself,

[1] I am inclined to agree with Professor Peet that the real place was close to the Mediterranean shore.

commemorated the miracle; but there is indeed scarcely a Jewish speaker or writer, down to the time of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, who does not refer to it.

Thus delivered from their chief foes, the Israelites had to face none of the horrors such as have assailed other migrating tribes: none, for example, like those which all but destroyed the Kalmucks on their journey from the Don to the Chinese Wall. They were few in number—the ridiculous total of six hundred thousand grown men given in the Pentateuch did not need a Colenso to expose it—and the oases of the desert supplied food enough for their flocks and herds. They were welcomed by some of their Arab kinsfolk; and they found in the sanctuary of Kadesh, on the border of Palestine, a centre for their religious life. There they remained a long time: the tradition says a whole generation. All this time, if we may believe the Scriptural narrative, Moses remained their leader, confirming their religious beliefs and strengthening their national life. Whether he had any idea of endeavouring to conquer the nations to the north, and re-forming a connection with the tribes that had remained in Palestine, is uncertain. We hear, indeed, of an attempt to spy out the land; but the

report was so unfavourable as to deter the Israelites from the design, if ever formed. An alliance, however, seems to have been made, even so early, with the powerful tribe of Caleb, which occupied the country just to the south of Hebron; the Kenites and Jerahmeelites also were taken into a kind of loose confederacy with Israel: and the help of these septs was afterwards of great value.

A series of journeys, from place to place in the desert, is very briefly summarized in the Book of Numbers; but it is not till the end of the "forty years" that we light on anything like authentic detail. Israel had always recognized her kinship with Moab, Ammon, and Edom: and, in her wanderings, she abstained from raiding the territories of these nations. But, just at this time, a terrible blow had overtaken Moab. An Amorite king, Sihon of Heshbon by name, had recently assailed her, destroyed several of her cities, and reduced her to the last stage of exhaustion. An ancient song preserves the feeling of the time, as the Servian ditties keep alive the memory of the fatal day of Kossovo:—

> Come ye to Heshbon,
> Let the city of Sihon be built and established:
> For a fire is gone out of Heshbon,

A flame from the city of Sihon:
It hath devoured Ar of Moab,
The lords of the "Bamoth" of Arnon:
Woe unto thee, Moab!
Thou art undone, O people of Chemosh!
He hath given his sons as fugitives,
And his daughters into captivity.

In the very moment of his triumph Sihon fell into sudden and irremediable destruction. The Israelite tribes, perhaps moved by an impulse of sympathy with their Moabite relatives, perhaps simply seeking a more permanent home, attacked him, defeated him, and, in accordance with their horrible religion, put every man, woman, and child to the "herem" or ban: not a soul was left alive. The conquerors entered into the Amorite inheritance; and for some time their abode was in Heshbon and its dependencies. It would appear, indeed, that their neighbourhood was some embarrassment to their ally the king of Moab, who is said to have sent for the magic aid of a well-known soothsayer named Balaam in order to rid himself of such dangerous neighbours. This incident led a later poet to put into the mouth of Balaam a splendid declamation, with which, after the fashion of Gray in the *Bard*, an *ex-post-facto* prophecy of the greatness of Israel is skilfully interwoven.

The conquest of Heshbon was the last achievement of Moses. All tradition agrees that he never crossed the Jordan: and this exclusion seemed so strange to the Jews themselves that the hero was represented as having brought it on himself by some offence against the jealous Yahweh. He was, says the story, permitted to see the whole Promised Land from the "specular mount" of Pisgah; but, despite his entreaties, was not allowed to enter. He died on the mount, and was buried there; but no man knew of his sepulchre. This ignorance would perhaps have been impossible to any nation but the Jewish.

Yet Moses was rightly regarded by Israel as its true founder: and few more influential men have ever been born into the world than this half-legendary leader of a small wandering clan. So great was his name among his own people that they ascribed to him a long and most complicated code of laws, and the composition of five volumes to which they paid a reverence even more profound than that yielded by Islam to the Koran. This reverence, despising the dust of death and the darkness of centuries, is sufficient to prove the greatness of the man. If criticism must deprive him of his so-called books, and must point out that after all

he was but a wandering sheikh, let us remember that criticism has done a similar work with our own Alfred, and yet left his true greatness higher than ever.

CHAPTER II

The Conquest

After the death of Moses, the nation rapidly grew, until its borders became too strait for it. It was necessary, for some families at least, to emigrate: and it was unnecessary to climb Pisgah in order to see the natural path of advance. Over the Jordan lay a fertile land, tempting to the invader by its fairness, "flowing", as the Israelites phrased it, "with milk and honey", and offering, through its divisions, a probable easy prey. The Egyptian domination, which had compelled a superficial unity under the great Thothmes, had broken down long before; and the Israelites saw now a number of petty cities, each jealous and independent of its neighbours. The Hittites and Phœnicians in the north, and the Philistines in the "Shephelah" or south-western lowlands, alone exhibited some sort of loose unity: the rest might be taken one by one.

Our main account speaks of a complete and miraculous conquest, achieved in a few years, under

the leadership of a single great general called Joshua. Fortunately, however, we have fragments of other narratives which give us a much more probable story, and one, by the way, consistent with what we know of the later history: while hints here and there enable us to reconstruct missing portions of the tale. From the all too brief summary in the first chapter of Judges we learn that the first tribe to cross the Jordan was Judah, which advanced in the direction of the "Negeb" or south. The task, however, proved harder than had been anticipated, and Judah summoned Simeon to his aid. Some ephemeral successes, it would seem, followed: but soon, aroused by an obscure act of treachery on the part of Simeon and another tribe, Levi, the central cities combined, and the offending tribes were annihilated. Judah narrowly escaped the same fate; only an alliance with the friendly Calebites saved him. Another tribe, that of Dinah, appears to have intermarried with the Shechemites, and thenceforward disappears from history. Levi survived, but only as the name of a priestly caste: of Simeon we hear no more. What the crime was for which this terrible expiation was exacted we can only dimly guess from the curious narrative in the thirty-fourth chapter of Genesis: but that Israel as a whole

regarded the punishments as just is plain. In the famous poem usually called the *Blessing of Jacob,* it is thus that the poet speaks of the guilty tribes:—

Simeon and Levi are brethren:
Weapons of violence are their compacts:
O, my soul, come not thou into their secret plan;
Unto their assembly, my glory, be not thou united:
For in their anger they slew men,
And in their wrath they houghed oxen:
Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce,
And their wrath, for it was cruel.

Among the more permanent conquests of Judah and Caleb we may place Hebron, Bezek, and Debir or Kirjath-sepher: while their friends the Kenites —with whom Moses owned kinship—destroyed Arad in the far south, and inhabited, if not the cities, at least the country districts.

It is now that the most powerful tribe, that of Joseph, appears upon the scene; and we have no reason to doubt that their leader was Joshua, or that Joshua was a man of great military skill. Amid the exaggerations of the priestly writer whose work fills most of the book that bears the hero's name, we can dimly detect a great victory over a confederacy of kings who met Joshua at Beth-horon; and the writer has fortunately preserved for us the

words of an old poet calling on the sun to stay his course and watch the deeds of the warrior:—

> Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon,
> And thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon.

We can trace, also, the capture of one or two towns, Bethel and Ai, by stratagem, others by main force. But the writer of Judges gives us clearly to understand that as a rule the successes of Israel were confined to the hill-country. In the valleys and plains the cities, defended by their walls and by their "chariots of iron", held their own against the invader for centuries, and even at times asserted a dominion over him. Some, such as Gibeon and Shechem, entered into an alliance with Israel on terms of equality or semi-subjection: others, such as Bethshan, though gradually surrounded by the enemy, maintained their independence down to, or even through, the times of the kings. The conception of the author of "Joshua"—a speedy and complete conquest—is utterly contrary both to history and to probability. More trustworthy is the naïve confession of "Judges", so often repeated as he gives his list of towns—"The Canaanite *would* dwell in the land." Despite the gentle persuasions of the sword, fire, and the "herem", he manifested

an obstinate determination to stay. Nay, in at least one case it was Israel that showed the spirit of submission. "Issachar," says the "Blessing of Jacob"—

> Issachar is a strong ass
> Crouching down between the sheepfolds:
> And he saw a resting-place, that it was good,
> And the land, that it was pleasant:
> And he bowed his shoulder to bear,
> And became a thrall under the *corvée*.

As for the confederacies of Sidon and of the Philistines, they were naturally left alone. Not only did they occupy the plains, where Yahweh was all but impotent, but their methods of war were apparently more scientific than those of Israel; and to attack them would have been to court disaster.

The tribes that settled in the north, Asher, Zebulun, Naphtali, may very possibly have been planted there long before Moses: they may, indeed, never have gone down with Jacob to Egypt. But in any case, Joseph and Judah would recognize their kinship: and one of the last triumphs ascribed to Joshua must, if it took place, have been of enormous importance to these tribes. A great confederacy had been formed under Jabin, king of Hazor, which would, if allowed its way, have

crushed the whole of northern Israel. But we are told that it was itself shattered by Joshua at the waters of Merom. If so, we may imagine that Ephraim, momentarily free from war in its own area, was able to lend assistance to its brethren: but we must not be misled into thinking that this implies any real national unity. The tribes still remained separate and independent: nor could it have been easy at the time to foresee what force could fuse them into one.

Nor must we conceive the territory, even of a single tribe, as homogeneous. Scattered Canaanite settlements were everywhere to be found, with their own language, gods, and customs: and, though in time the barriers would gradually break down, for centuries these towns would remain, monuments of what had been and symbols of what was to be. Yet it may well be that a man of true insight might have foreboded that the future lay with the invader. Despite the vast superiority of the Canaanite in civilization and refinement, his superiority was, like that of the Romans in the days of Teutonic invasion, marked with the seeds of decay; and the rude Israelite, like the rude Frank or Visigoth, possessed a vitality which was sure to predominate in the coming partnership. The observer

would see the town-dweller slowly yielding place to the mountaineer, and the mountaineer slowly acquiring the arts of the plain. As Ephraim threw off a new tribe, that of Benjamin, "born after Jacob reached Canaan," a tribe full of the ravenous energy of a wolf, but with intellectual powers and cravings, while the Canaanite remained stationary, the observer would gain another indication that Israel must increase and the Canaanite decrease, until in time the one, like Aaron's rod, devoured the other.

CHAPTER III

The Judges

Marvellously different as the *Book* of Joshua is from the succeeding Book of Judges, there is no marked difference between the periods covered by the two works; indeed, to a considerable extent the periods overlap. Seen in his true light, Joshua is to Ephraim exactly what Gideon is to Abiezer; a successful leader whose influence in war extends into a time of peace, but does not reach beyond his own tribe; and the era of the "Judges" is as much an era of conquest as that of Joshua. The enemy is still powerful, still capable at times of forming confederacies and of subjecting individual Israelitish tribes; and can be defeated only by strong effort and by capable commanders. The tide of invasion advances but slowly and with many retrogressions: it is only after long periods that we can measure the progress made.

The term Judge is but a poor representative of the original Shôphêt. Readers of Roman history

know that the chief magistrates among the Carthaginians were called *Sufetes*. The Carthaginians, like the Jews, spoke a Semitic language; and this word *Sufetes* is etymologically the same as the Hebrew *Shôphĕtīm*. But we must remember that the Carthaginian republic was highly organized and developed; while the Israelites, at the period we have reached, were hardly out of barbarism; nor must we limit the *Shophet* to the functions of our judge. The verb *Shaphat*, from which it is derived, means not only to judge, but also to punish, to avenge, to defend, to deliver, and even, in a general sense, to rule. Hence we may often be at a loss to know which meaning was uppermost, at any particular time, in the mind of the author. Twice over, for example, we are told that Samson "judged Israel"; but we cannot easily picture him as sitting like Deborah under a palm-tree and dispensing justice. In the case of the Minor Judges the term approximates to sheikh, chief, or sachem. To Ehud and Gideon it is not applied at all; nor, indeed, probably, was it ever used by the earliest authorities on whose writings our present Book of Judges is based.

The vagueness of the title is paralleled by the

vagueness of the subject-matter, which may almost be summed up in the phrase of the author himself: "In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes." It is impossible to evolve an ordered chronology out of the dates given to us in these chapters; nor is it always easy to detect the amount of truth that lies behind the folktales here, so fortunately for us, preserved from oblivion.

Rejecting, as obvious fable, the story of Othniel and the king of "Mesopotamia", we pass on to that of Ehud. In this we mark several points of historical value. In the first place, the conquest of Reuben by Eglon of Moab gives us the first sign of the weakness and decline of that tribe, once the chief of the sons of Jacob. Its fall seems to have been due to some defect of character—unstable as water, it could not excel. On the other hand, the tribe of Gad thus early appears to have shown that stubbornness and unwillingness to acknowledge defeat which, like the fault of Reuben, is commemorated by the poet:

> Gad, a troop shall overcome him,
> But he shall overcome at the last.

This firmness of Gad was of immense importance to Israel in later days: it laid the foundation for many of the victories of David.

In Ehud himself we note the first appearance of a hero from the new tribe of Benjamin—and a man thoroughly typical of his race—ruthless, energetic, determined. His savage murder of the oppressor need not meet with our approval; but we must remember that assassination was a recognized method of war in the days of Philip II of Spain; nay, that there were many who sought to rid themselves of Napoleon in that fashion.

The mention of Shamgar the son of Anath as one of the deliverers of Israel, brief as it is, raises a number of difficulties. All we know of Anath is that she was a heathen goddess; and the Philistines, six hundred of whom Shamgar is said to have slain with an ox-goad, do not seem to have troubled Israel at that time. The tale would appear to be a mistaken explanation of the obscure passage in the song of Deborah, where we are told that in the days of Shamgar the son of Anath caravans ceased to journey, and men went by cross-roads. It is more probable that Shamgar was an enemy of Israel than a friend.

With Deborah we reach comparatively firm

ground: we have what almost all scholars agree is a song from the very time; corrupted and altered in the transmission, but sufficiently intelligible to yield us a badly-needed gleam of light. Many difficulties are at once removed by the rejection of the much later prose version of the story, which has apparently confused the deliverance wrought by Deborah with that achieved by Joshua over Jabin king of Hazor. Of Jabin the song knows nothing; the oppressor is Sisera king of Harosheth-ha-goyim. Long years he has mightily crushed the children of Israel; among all their forty thousand warriors [1] he left them "neither shield nor spear". Israel cries unto Yahweh; and he provides the deliverer. Deborah, the wife of Lapidoth, like Veleda among the German tribes in Roman times, arouses the nation, drives Barak into the fray, and draws Sisera into the plain with his chariots of iron. Amid the metaphors of the poet we can picture the scene. Yahweh, for once, fights in the valleys, and the stars assist him from their spheres. A storm of rain comes to the help of Yahweh against the mighty; Kishon overflows, the plain is sodden, and the chariots become immovable. The horses, driven wild by

[1] This is the first hint as to the population of the tribes. It is the business of a poet to use hyperbole; but where are the 600,000 that came out of Egypt?

the frantic charioteers, break their hoofs with their struggles. Upon the helpless host come Barak and his light-armed mountaineers. It is no battle, but a slaughter, like that of Trasimene. At length Sisera leaps from his chariot, and escapes—for a while. His flight leads him to the tents of the Kenites, old allies of Israel; and here, as he is being treacherously welcomed by Jael the wife of the sheikh, a sudden blow with a heavy mallet breaks his skull.

> At her knees he staggers, he falls,
> At her knees he staggers, he falls:
> As he reels, there he falls down, dead.

The poem ends with a magnificent burst of triumphant sarcasm—a picture of the Queen mother expecting the victorious return of her son, with dyed garments for the women, and a necklace for the queen: and then, with a fine reticence, comes the cry, "So perish all thine enemies, O Yahweh!"

At about the same time as the northern tribes were thus destroying their oppressors, the midlands were being tormented by their Bedouin neighbours, called in our book Midianites. These, we are informed elsewhere, had been extirpated to the very last man by Moses; but now they rise from the dead

and do many mighty works. They were, indeed, with their ceaseless raids, a frightful pest, being apparently better organized than usual, but restrained as little as ever by mercy or forbearance. The story of the deliverer has come to us in two forms, which have been combined by the editor in a somewhat puzzling manner: but, though the two tales give different names and somewhat different incidents, they leave us little doubt as to what actually happened. Gideon, or Jerubaal, was the head of the powerful Manassite clan of Abiezer. He dwelt at Ophrah, which the Midianites had raided, incidentally murdering his brothers. Putting himself at the head of the clan, he contrived, by a night attack, to surprise his elusive foe. His assault was completely successful; the Midianites fled in confusion. But Gideon was not the man to forgo an advantage; he pursued them with his indomitable band, and finally succeeded in overtaking and slaying the two chiefs, thus breaking the power of the tribe. The spoil was immense, and the repute gained by the victor widespread. With the booty he set up a sanctuary and an "ephod" of Baal-Yahweh in Ophrah, to which multitudes resorted; and, for the rest of his days, he ruled in almost kingly fashion not only over Abiezer, but over Manasseh and

probably part of Ephraim itself. There can be little doubt that the success of his monarchic sway in preserving the peace was remembered, and played its part in securing the election of Saul when Israel needed unity in combating the Philistines.

A kingdom, indeed, might well have established itself in this family, but for the misconduct of Gideon's son Abimelech, which is related to us in one of the most interesting chapters of the Book of Judges. Abimelech was the son of a Canaanitish woman, and was therefore in a good position for accelerating that fusion between Israel and Canaan which had already begun. But his character stood in the way: apart from ambition and determination he had, so far as we can judge, none of the requisite qualities. His savage murder of his brothers alienated his father's kindred, and it was not very long before he alienated the kindred of his mother also. Shechem, under the leadership of a Canaanite named Gaal, revolted against him; and though he was able to crush this rebellion, he soon perished in an attack upon the neighbouring town of Thebez. The tribe of Manasseh was not destined to rule over Israel; and it may have been about the time of Abimelech's death that a large part of the tribe

passed back over the Jordan, and conquered the region of Bashan, which according to the legend, had already been wrested from the giant Og by Moses. The clan that thus occupied, or re-occupied, Bashan was that of Machir; the predominant family was that of Jair; and the villages settled by this family bore the name of Havvoth-Jair for many generations.

Meanwhile, a large portion of the tribe of Dan, finding the neighbourhood of Philistia too uncomfortable, migrated to the far north, and, surprising a little Phœnician town called Laish, put the inhabitants to the sword and dwelt in the town. The intensely interesting story in the seventeenth and eighteenth chapters of Judges—which is as usual made up from at least two sources—tells us how, on the way north, this band stopped at the house of a man named Micah, in Mount Ephraim, robbed him of his priest and of his images, and carried them with them to Laish. This was the origin of the famous sanctuary at Dan, which, though so rarely mentioned in our records, must have played an immensely important part in the religious life of Israel. As we shall see later, it was patronized by Jeroboam: and the support of a priesthood which

derived directly from the grandson of Moses must have been, in its turn, a great asset to that king in his endeavour to assert his independence of Jerusalem.

As we have already mentioned, the tribe of Reuben had rapidly declined from its first estate. It may, indeed, have endeavoured to separate itself from the other tribes. In the Book of Numbers we are told of a rebellion against "Moses," headed by three Reubenites, Dathan, Abiram, and On the son of Peleth. Again, in the Book of Joshua we read of an altar set up by Reuben which seemed to mark an intention of breaking away from allegiance to Yahweh. If Reuben had really this intention, the punishment was speedy. Unable to stand alone, the tribe fell an easy prey to the Ammonites, and nearly involved in its ruin the whole territory beyond Jordan. From this fate the land was preserved by the skill and energy of a Gileadite freebooter of mixed blood, who succeeded in repelling the invader. But Jephthah will be remembered less for his victory than for the fatal vow which resulted in his sacrifice to Yahweh of his only daughter. In early days Yahweh, like his kindred Chemosh, Moloch, and the gods of Carthage, undoubtedly required many such sacrifices, of which indeed Se-

mitic history is full: but our authorities mention few, in Israel, of later date than this.[1]

Meanwhile, in the south-west, the gradual advance of Judah had brought her into contact with the powerful and warlike nation of the Philistines. This race, migrating probably from Crete, had established itself comparatively recently in a corner of the land to the whole of which its celebrity was to give its own name. Its warlike genius seems to have been great, and the position it occupied was, and has remained down to our own day, of enormous strategic importance. The great trade-route from Egypt to Mesopotamia ran from time immemorial along the "Shephêlah", and then bent to the right along the plain of Esdraelon. Philistia held the gateway with her five cities: and there is not a single conqueror of Palestine, from Thothmes to Alexander, from Alexander to Allenby, who has not had reason to recognize the strength of that gateway. For the next hundred years the dominating question was, whether Gath or Shiloh, whether Dagon or Yahweh, would establish dominion over Canaan: and for a long time it looked as if Dagon would prevail.

[1] The "sacrifice" of the seven descendants of Saul (II Sam. xxi) is the last that is fully described.

Of the early stages of this great conflict, so rich in momentous consequences to the history of the world—tiny in scale, but perhaps morally and religiously more important even than the war from which we have just emerged—we know but little. We can see dimly that the struggle was fatal to the relics of the tribe of Dan, so large a part of which had migrated north. On the other hand it compelled the consolidation of Judah, which now first begins a really close fusion with Caleb; and it finally compelled a temporary union of all Israel. At first, doubtless, the war was one of raids and guerrillas: and the deeds of the leaders of small bands, magnified by tradition, survive to us, crystallized round the figure of Samson: who, though to some he appears purely mythical, seems to us more like a Cid or an Empecinado of the Spanish tales. We have not the Philistine side of the story. The Israelite side, of course, represents the enemy as a race of Goliaths, overcome by intrepid boys, and their armies as mighty cohorts, scattered by the single arm of a Samson or a Shamgar. Thus, in the Scottish legends, a Wallace puts whole bands of Edward's myrmidons to flight, and succumbs, when he does succumb, not to the valour of the foe but to the treachery of a false friend. These tales of

Samson, however, are extraordinarily fascinating, if not for their truth, yet as some of the oldest in Jewish history, and as casting a clear light on the character of the race among which they grew up. That race must have been mercilessly savage, profoundly superstitious, narrow, clannish, grimly humorous. In the dexterity and cunning fostered during these early struggles, we may see the dim origins of the intellectual keenness which has distinguished the nation throughout its long and chequered history. We owe a deep debt of gratitude to the man who, like an ancient Jacob Grimm or Walter Scott, collected these old tales and wrote them down: nor less deep must be our gratitude to the Deuteronomist editor, who, despite all his prepossessions, did not destroy these legends, but incorporated them in a work which, once admitted to the Jewish canon, was destined to live for ever.

CHAPTER IV

The Struggle with Philistia

In the contest with the most powerful enemy Israel had yet met, the tribes required all their energy, determination, and valour. Above all, they required unity; but the perception that this was necessary only gradually forced itself upon them. Indeed, if we are to believe the strange story contained in the last three chapters of Judges, they were never further from it than at the moment when the great conflict was beginning. They had just, so we are told, all but extirpated the youngest and perhaps most virile of their own tribes—that of Benjamin. If this tale, as it stands, were true, it would make the whole subsequent history unintelligible. Fortunately, a study of it shows that, as it stands, it cannot be true. As usual, it has come down to us in two forms, which have been, more clumsily than usual, patched together: and the account given in one of these forms is so ludicrous in its details as to throw discredit on the whole. The

numbers, to mention but one point, are so stupendous, and the conduct, both of Benjamin and of Israel, so fatuous, that no credulity can swallow the story. The other version, though much less absurd, has also its gigantic improbabilities. How much fact underlies this mass of fiction it is impossible to say: there are some who would reject the whole as an invention of some fanatical enemy of the house of Saul, who, after the manner of fanatics, extended his hatred from the man to his family and from his family to his country. Be this so or not, we find, very shortly, Benjamin not only alive but full of vigour and daring.

The first stages of the war show Philistia victorious. So far as Israel had a leader at all, she found him only in the aged priest of the sanctuary at Shiloh. The defence was piecemeal, and the divided land fell an easy prey to the invader. At last, in utter desperation, the people called on Eli to allow them to take into battle the symbol of their religion and the talisman of their hopes: the "Ark of God". But the Ark had no more success than the "carroccio" of Florence on the fatal day of the Arbia. At first, indeed, the Philistines were panic-stricken at the sight of it; but, with a return of courage which proves their discipline and the skill of their lead-

ers, they came back to their ranks, "quitted themselves like men, and were strong." The two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, who had accompanied the sacred chest, were slain, the Israelites were totally defeated, and the Ark of God was taken. The news was the death of the aged Eli; the glory departed from Israel; and—though this is not certain—the sanctuary of Shiloh itself seems to have been destroyed by the victors. At any rate, we hear no more of it except as a memory of departed splendour.

After this great triumph, the Philistines occupied large tracts of the south, and planted garrisons in the strategic positions. All seemed lost; and the broken nation sought, in some great sin on the part of the priests and people, the explanation of Yahweh's desertion of his worshippers. Within a short time the house of Eli lost the priesthood, and its few representatives wandered from sanctuary to sanctuary, begging for a menial office and a morsel of bread—a clear judgment from Yahweh on the crime that had brought evil upon Israel.

The next years are almost void of authentic history, nor is even the legend that takes its place either single or uniform. According to one story the years are filled with the portentous figure of

Samuel, a man dedicated to Yahweh even before his birth, and of such renown that all Israel reverences him with more than the reverence once given to Moses; a man whose mere prayer was sufficient to enable the oppressed nation to discomfit the seasoned armies of Philistia, and to recover all the captured cities; who went like a judge on circuit every year to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah, to return to Ramah for his well-earned repose. He makes and unmakes kings like an earlier Hildebrand or Innocent III; he is angry with Yahweh himself and receives no punishment; nay, he rises from Sheol to announce to the trembling Saul his coming doom.

Very different is the other picture—that of a *rôeh* or soothsayer in the land of Zuph, so little known beyond the borders of his city that Saul, a few miles away, has never heard of him. He has, it is true, a gift of second-sight: men resort to him when they have lost a sheep or an ass; and his blessing is thought necessary to make the communal sacrifice efficacious; but there is no sign in him of the mighty theocrat we have above described.

The fact is, that here again we have the old phenomenon—a double or even a treble narrative. In one of these, of which unluckily only very scanty fragments are preserved, we should have

found a life of Saul, much more favourable to that unfortunate prince than the one we now have. In another of these narratives we have the work of some late prophetic writer, whose object is to glorify his order in the person of Samuel, and to represent the very foundation of the kingship as a sin against the majesty of Yahweh: a man, in fact, informed with the same spirit as he who pictured Gideon refusing the crown with the words, "Yahweh shall be king over you." In what may well be a source different from either of these others, we have apparently a life of David written from a standpoint opposed, it is true, to Saul but untheocratic. It is from these fragments that the student to-day is compelled to piece out a history as satisfactory as he can contrive to make it.

Despite Samuel's decisive victory at Mizpah, and the "Stone of Help" which he erected to commemorate it, we find immediately afterwards a state of things prevailing, precisely as if it had never been gained. The Philistine garrisons occupy exactly their old positions, and the Israelites, forbidden to possess weapons of war, are still in their old subjection. To add to the agony of the country, the Ammonites take advantage of its weakness to assail the region beyond Jordan, and finally besiege the

last stronghold, Jabesh Gilead. A cry goes up from the beleaguered fortress, and is echoed by the whole people. Wise men, like those in the Greek camp before Troy, see clearly the main cause of the disasters. "Divided rule is not good; let there be one ruler." Isolated attempts on the part of single clans, and still more on the part of single villages, are bound to fail. The thoughts of men turn to the tribe of Benjamin, and to the most distinguished younger man of that tribe, Saul, the son of Kish, who has at least one requisite for the post, great bodily strength and vigour. At first—though we are given to understand there was some opposition —Saul justifies the choice, and succeeds in impressing some sort of unity upon the nation. By a rapid and energetic march upon the point of chief danger, Jabesh is relieved, and the Ammonites are driven back. After this auspicious beginning, the new king, and his young son Jonathan, turn to the south-west, and an important garrison of the Philistines is destroyed. Hope springs again in the hearts of the down-trodden people; they rise against the oppressor, and a long struggle ensues, somewhat resembling that of the Spanish guerrillas against Napoleon; amid many vicissitudes of fortune, there is no longer any idea of submission. The whole

reign of Saul, in fact, is one long war with Philistia; and, though he himself failed of ultimate victory, yet his stubborn valour must have done much to wear down the strength of the enemy and to prepare the way for his more fortunate successor.

While reading the history in order to detect the underlying truth, the English student, even if ignorant of Hebrew, can scarcely go wrong if he bears in mind two principles. Every representation of Samuel as a sort of spiritual overlord of the king, is false, and the product of a much later age. Every explanation of Saul's failure as due to sin either against Yahweh or against Samuel is also false, and due to that same spirit we have seen so often already—the spirit which believed that success followed on piety, and failure on the reverse. Thus guided, we can see, through the dim mist of antiquity, a long series of alternate victories and defeats, through all of which the courage of Israel is fairly maintained. Amalek is overthrown, Philistia held in check. Surrounded by his devoted Benjamites, Saul, from his ancestral home of Gibeah, keeps up the struggle, through all turns of fortune, for years. His sons grow up around him and lend their help. But slowly the strain becomes too much for him—a deep melancholia possesses him, in

which men, as is inevitable at such a time, see an evil spirit from Yahweh: and the discouragement of the ruler threatens to extend to the ruled. The melancholia breeds suspicion—he begins to distrust his best servants—and the suspicion, by the law of nature, tends to justify itself. Even his son, Jonathan, finally falls into temporary disgrace with him.

It is while this terrible disease is eating away Saul's powers that a new and immortal name gradually emerges into the "darkness visible" of tradition. During the previous century or so the barrier between Israelite and "Gentile" had been slowly breaking down: intercommunion and intermarriage had begun, to the vast advantage of both sides. The silent revolution thus developing is hardly mentioned by the historians, but is really of more importance than much that they give in full detail. David, a young warrior of the house of Jesse, living in Bethlehem to the north of Judah, appears to have had both Calebite and Moabite blood in his veins, and to have derived energy and intellect from his mixed ancestry. The stories about his first appearance at court are hopelessly contradictory. According to one, he is sent for because of his musical skill to give relief to the afflicted king. According to another he attaches himself to

the army, as a full-grown soldier, and speedily wins renown. According to a third (which is so late in its present form that a large part of it is omitted by the Greek translators) he appears accidentally in the host, as a mere lad, at the moment when all Israel is paralysed by the defiance of a gigantic Philistine, accepts the challenge, slays the monster, and opens the way to victory. This last tale, one of the most famous legends in the world, unfortunately vanishes before modern criticism. It is but one more example of the tendency of mankind to attach the great deeds and sayings of unknown men to famous heroes. As all the witticisms of Sydney Smith's contemporaries were fathered on Sydney Smith, so the victory over Goliath was transferred from the obscure Elhanan to his more celebrated townsman David, who was, in time, to achieve a still greater feat, and annex the Psalms of poets not born till long after he had died.

At any rate, the success of David was sufficient to arouse the jealousy of his master. Though at first a prime favourite, and even made the king's son-in-law, he met with the usual fate of officers whose services to their sovereigns have been too conspicuous. According to our accounts he was driven from the court, only just escaping with his life, into exile

and outlawry. The priests, accused of abetting him, were ruthlessly massacred, and nothing but the devoted friendship of Jonathan saved him from sharing their fate. Finally, hopeless of a change of fortune, he was compelled to the desperate step of seeking refuge with Achish the king of Gath.

It was, however, during these months of danger that David, like Bruce after him, learned coolness, resource in extremity, daring in attack, rapidity of decision—all the qualities of a great warrior. As his name grew, so did the band that followed him. Four hundred, six hundred, desperadoes acquired discipline under him, and became the nucleus of his later bodyguard. Nay, we hear that he received a city from Achish, and ruled it as a Philistine vassal.

That such a man should also have been a poet—that in the midst of these scapes and perils he should have composed any of these Psalms which have been ascribed to him, might seem utterly impossible. To Westerners, indeed, it is so. We can hardly picture William Wallace, during his flight from Falkirk, as making an elegy on his misfortunes, or the Black Prince, during the pursuit after Poitiers, as chanting a pæan of triumph. But the Eastern mind is different. We think of Bábar, in one of his

many flights from murderous foes, escaping into a cave, watching the enemy ride harmless by, and then sitting down to compose a lyric in the language and manner of Hafiz. There is much in the great Mogul conqueror that reminds us of David; and we can only wish that the resemblance had been yet closer, and that the Hebrew, like the Mohammedan, had left us his own authentic memoirs.

Thus, through months and perhaps years, the exile lived his adventurous life, now pursuing a robber band of Amalekites with his faithful followers, now himself pursued; now protecting the cattle of a churlish sheikh, now turning to chastise the sheikh's ingratitude. Though driven beyond the bounds of Yahweh's domain, he still retains some devotion to him. The one survivor from Saul's slaughter of the priestly clan is with him, and carries the ephod, or image of Yahweh. At every emergency David consults the ephod, and acts as the oracle bids him. He is, in fact, a man after Yahweh's own heart—shrewd, crafty, daring, at times ruthless, at times magnanimous. Not for centuries yet could Yahweh have desired a better servant.

At length deliverance comes. The Philistines, weary perhaps of endless guerrilla warfare, combine

the forces of all their five cities, and advance irresistibly along the great Plain. David, anxious to assist them, is saved from the unpatriotic step by the Philistine fear of treachery; but they were quite strong enough without him. Saul was driven to the very end of Esdraelon, and finally brought to bay in the mountains of Gilboa. Wonderful is the picture, drawn by the saga, of the heroic king, turning in his despair to the magic arts he had suppressed, and calling the spirit of Samuel from the vasty deep, only to learn that even on the heights Yahweh will desert him, and will give his kingdom to another. Next day he falls, perhaps by his own hand at the close of the disastrous battle, perhaps—as another account has it—slain by an Amalekite who had lighted on the spot in search of plunder. Still more wonderful is the immortal dirge sung by David over the death of his enemy and of his beloved Jonathan, with its refrain echoing down the ages—"How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!"

CHAPTER V

David

In Saul and his three sons, it might well have seemed to the most sanguine, the soul of resistance to Philistine aggression had utterly perished. The one captain who might still have maintained the contest was a vassal of Gath; Saul's heir, Ishbaal, was driven beyond Jordan and was devoid of ability and energy; the enemy held a chain of posts along the Plain from Gaza to Bethshan. Who could foresee that within a few years the stricken nation would rise to heights never attained before, would repel the invader, and would go forth, conquering and to conquer on every side?

Yet so it was; and the cause is almost summed up in the one name David. No wonder that the Jews never forgot from what he had saved them and to what he advanced them, or that they gave him even more glory than he had really earned.

Of course circumstances conspired with him. It is a truism that no great man can arise if circumstances are so unfavourable as to keep him down.

No Napoleon could have appeared under Louis XIV. It is sufficient if the great man conquers obstacles that would have been too much for *others*, and makes a better use of advantages than others would have made. And, as time went on, David's keen eye detected gleams of light amid the darkness. In the first place, there were large tracts of the mountainous country of Judah where the enemy had not penetrated; here, in the caves and wilds, resistance could be organized, and local knowledge (of which David himself must have had much) could be put to use; and this so secretly that the Philistine overlords might, at the decisive moment, be taken by surprise. In the second place, the retirement of the relics of the house of Saul to Mahanaim made it easy for Judah to transfer the easy allegiance of those days to one of their own bone and flesh. Thirdly, it would seem that the Philistines did not follow up their victory to the extent of a complete conquest—in fact, till the time of the Romans few ancient nations learnt the art of conquest: they understood extermination, and they understood independence; but, apart from a loose vassalage they knew no mean between the two. And it would seem that, shortly after Gilboa, the Philistines suffered some crushing disas-

ter at the hands of Egypt, which weakened them just at the moment when they might otherwise have consolidated their rule. At any rate, after a short time, David openly threw off his allegiance, and Judah openly chose him king at Hebron. Nor did the opposition he now met with come chiefly from his old masters: it came from the partisans of the house of Saul. During some years a desultory civil warfare went on, in which David waxed continually stronger and stronger, and Ishbaal weaker and weaker. Finally, desirous that the sword should not devour for ever, and perhaps also disgusted by the weakness of Ishbaal, the chief commander of the Saulite party, Abner the son of Ner, came over to David. Though he was immediately murdered by David's general Joab, in pursuit of a blood-feud, Israel at large, realizing David's uncertain position between his open enemies and his extremist friends, held him innocent of the crime, even though the criminal had to be left unpunished. A few words of the dirge sung by the king at Abner's funeral still remain:—

Was then Abner to die as a *nithing* dies?
Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters;
As a man falls before villains, so fellest thou.

When the news of the death of the prince and

great man reached Ishbaal, his weakness and terror became yet more pitiable; and two men, seeing that the cause was hopeless, sought the favour of the rising sun by killing him. But David was not the man they took him to be. He had the magnanimity to see the point of view of his enemies, and perceived that Ishbaal was a "rightous man". The murderers were "taken away from the earth". There is much in David which, by modern standards, is deserving of grave censure; but we must never forget how far he was before his own age. It was not then, nor has it ever been till lately, the habit of Oriental monarchs to spare any possible supplanter; nor indeed have English kings always shown mercy to a rival line; but we find David not only avenging the death of Saul and the murder of Ishbaal, not only mourning the slaughter of Abner, but welcoming to his own table the son of Jonathan, and leaving the Saulite clan in peace. It was not till later that, in obedience to the imperious demands of a superstition which he could not escape, he yielded to the demands of Gibeon and sacrificed a few of the family. He had the merciful soul which so often goes with greatness; though, like Cæsar, he reserved his clemency chiefly for his own nation.

After the death of Ishbaal "all the tribes of Israel" came to Hebron, and chose David as their king. His first step shows his strategic eye. As he glanced over the territory of Judah, he saw a position which was justly regarded as almost impregnable: the Canaanite tribe of the Jebusites had held it against all the assaults of Joshua and his successors. It was plainly the place for the capital of the new realm. David attacked it. The Jebusites, confident in the strength of their walls and hills, mocked him with jeers which became proverbial: but Jerusalem was taken, rebuilt, and so strongly fortified that it was never captured till the time of Nebuchadnezzar.[1]

Despite the expulsion of the Jebusites, there would appear to have been little fanaticism in David's mind. He spared the life of Araunah, the Jebusite king, and fostered, as far as in him lay, that amalgamation of Israel and Canaan which had been silently proceeding in recent generations. There was indeed in his time, whatever national or tribal jealousy may have existed between the two races, none of that bigoted *religious* hostility which we find in the Book of Deuteronomy; that was

[1] Previous "captures", like those of Shishak and Joash, were apparently due not to force but to capitulation.

the product of a later age and of a later development in Yahwism. For the present, the fusion was of enormous benefit to Israel. The Canaanites were vastly more civilized than the Hebrews, and their accession meant a great uplifting in Hebrew culture. The nomad became an agriculturist, the hillman a dweller in towns. We mark now the beginnings of trade, and it may be that Israel now first learnt writing. In mere population the change was enormous—the scanty settlements of Deborah's time are multiplied into the hundreds of thousands of Joab's census: and it became worth the while of the highly-advanced Phœnician cities of the north to cultivate the friendship of their growing southern neighbours. When Tyre made an alliance, we may be sure that her ally had commodities to give in return.

Thus established, with a firm base of operations, and if necessary a safe retreat, in the hills of Judah, David could afford to turn his mind to attack. Like Wellington in his Lusitanian fastness, he had been able to watch in security for the favourable moment: and he had by now trained up a band of captains able to carry out his designs.

He relied, apparently, for the most part, upon a professional nucleus; we hear of foreign officers

attracted into his service; of Uriah the Hittite and even of Ittai from Gath. As his repute increased, soldiers of fortune would flock in greater numbers to his standards; and round these skilled men the militia of the country could, in times of emergency, be grouped. In his commander in chief, his nephew Joab, he found a man of rapidity, skill, and prudence; nor was Joab's brother Abishai far behind him. Under these chiefs we find a number of others who must have been capable leaders; nor did David disdain to employ in his hosts men whose main distinction, as far as we can see, was mere physical strength—a very important point in a soldier even to-day, but almost indispensable then.

The Philistines were not likely to remain quiet while David was thus consolidating his power. We learn that as soon as they heard that he was anointed king over all Israel, they mustered their forces, and endeavoured to draw him into a decisive battle. What happened is somewhat rapidly and obscurely told by the historian; but we can gather that he eluded their first onset by "getting him into the hold" and that then, when they were scattered in the valley of Rephaim, he suddenly attacked them and gained a complete victory at Baalperazim. A little later he followed up this success by another in

the same region. His manœuvre reminds us of some of the stratagems of Hannibal. Refusing their frontal assault, he sent a body of troops by a wide circuit to fall upon them in the rear. Yahweh himself, giving the omen by a sound of marching in a clump of mulberry trees, fought for Israel as the Brethren fought for Rome at Regillus; and the Philistines were again defeated. We need not believe in the tales of complete conquest which the authorities give us; but it is pretty certain that, after a few years, Philistia was little danger to Israel.

It was about this time, when the sun of prosperity still shone upon the land, that David conceived the idea of bringing the "Ark of God", "whereupon the sacred Name was called", into the newly-won capital. Soon after its capture by the Philistines, the Ark, proving a dangerous neighbour to Dagon, was released, and abode for a long time in Kirjathjearim, at the house of a certain Abinadab "in the hill". The removal was a perilous process. As the Ark, under the guidance of Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, moved slowly on, the oxen stumbled. Uzzah, putting forth his hand to stay the precious chest, was instantly smitten dead by the jealous deity. No wonder that, as we read,

David was angry with Yahweh, and afraid to carry the Ark further. It was therefore left in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite for three months, until it was plain, by the prosperity of Obed-edom, that the capricious god might again be approached. Doubtless Obed-edom had been chosen, as a Philistine, in order that, if Yahweh's wrath again blazed forth, it might not strike a member of the chosen people: and when it was seen that even a Gittite was blessed by the divine sojourner, it seemed safe to transfer him to Jerusalem. Such was the remarkable god on whose varying whims the warriors of his country had to rely. At any rate he came peacefully enough into the city of David, and graciously accepted the homage of burnt offerings, music, and dance which was there paid to him. A story, which there seems no reason to distrust, tells us that David's wife Michal, the daughter of Saul, jeering at him for the *abandon* of his orgies on this occasion, was banished to the recesses of the harem: an act intelligible enough, but not likely to please the remaining adherents of Saul.

The defeat of Philistia left the warlike king free to turn his attention to aggressive warfare. For this, if we cease to judge him by the standards, lauded but scarcely acted on, of later days, we shall

not blame him. It is for those who persist in regarding him as a combination of prophet, hymn-writer, and all but Christian saint to reconcile the contradiction between these characteristics and that of the savage devastator of Ammon. The true parallel is with some Mohammed the Second or Solyman the Magnificent; and from that comparison, though the sphere of his operations was so much smaller, David need not shrink. Nay, if our own Henry V is excused for "busying the minds" of his people with unjust foreign quarrels, David, whose position in his own realm was more uncertain than Henry's in England, may well be pardoned. He seems to have made his first attack upon Moab; and the naïve historian relates without any sign of disapproval how he "measured the Moabites with the line, making them lie down upon the ground; and he measured two lines to put to death, and one to keep alive". Next, apparently, came the turn of Ammon, which—according to the only story we have—had provoked David by an insult to his ambassadors. Rightly distrusting their sole strength, the Ammonites called in the aid of the kings of Syria to the north, including that of Hadadezer king of Zobah. But Joab, warned in time, advanced himself to meet the northerners, while

Abishai contained the Ammonites. Both divisions were successful; and time was gained for David himself, with the main force of his kingdom, to attack and overwhelm Syria at "Helam on the River". The result in that region was an alliance with Toi king of Hamath, who had suffered from the hostility of Hadadezer. The Israelite hegemony thus reached its farthest bound to the north.

Meanwhile, in the centre, Joab continued the task of subduing Ammon, and after a siege of a year completed it by capturing the chief fortress of Rabbah. About the same time Edom also was defeated, barbarously ravaged, and made tributary; thus Esau the elder brother was made to "serve the younger."

It is probable that these stupendous exertions had somewhat affected the energy even of David. At any rate, the rest of his story gives us the picture, not of a heroic warrior, but of a man in his decline. The secret of the disasters that henceforward overtook him is that common peril of Oriental monarchies—the harem.

The story, told in full by a narrator of unsurpassed skill, need not be repeated here; nor, indeed, is it possible to retell it without spoiling it. It is in places obscure to us as it would not have been to

its original auditors; for we have to supply by guesswork what the saga-man was able to assume as known. It is *possible*, for example, that Ahithophel had been exasperated by the treatment of his granddaughter Bathsheba—but unlikely. It is possible, on the other hand, and likely, that Absalom, like Adonijah after him, had reason to suspect that there was a party at the court which meant to oust him from the succession, and that, like Aurugzebe, he determined to secure his chance by prompt action. It is fairly certain that Absalom was to some extent a tool in the hands of factions that may well have meant to make use of his popularity and then throw him over. Such were the Ephraimites who were jealous of the sudden rise of Judah, and the Saulites who spied a chance of raising a scion of their family to the throne. But the saga-man leaves these intrigues, tendencies, and cross-currents in the background, and concentrates on the persons of his drama. He does not even let us know whether Merib-baal, the son of Jonathan, was rightly accused or not; but, in a few picturesque touches, like the author of an Icelandic story, leaves motives apart, describes actions and quotes words—so often the cloak of thoughts.

That David was not what he had been, that in

fact he was now *magni nominis umbra* and little more, is proved by his unwise indulgence to Absalom, as to Adonijah, and by the weakness with which he first made Amasa commander in chief and then submitted, once again, to the domination of the rapid and forceful Joab. It was unquestionably Joab who saved the dynasty, alike by his victory over Absalom and by the crushing speed with which he extinguished the rebellion of Sheba. Yet David felt rather the feeble irritation of an old man at his own supersession than gratitude for the superlative services of his old comrade in arms, and treasured up his vengefulness to hand it on to his successor.

The end of the great reign shows us a contest for the succession raging round the bed of a dying man; and a conflict decided, not on grounds of justice, but by the skill of the victors in intrigue, and in making use of the still great prestige of David to further their ends. Solomon, thus raised to the kingship, begins his reign in true Oriental fashion, by removing his enemies from all chance of future rivalry; like the Turk, he could bear no brother near the throne.

The reign of David, even when all fictitious attributions are removed, remains of immense his-

toric import. Under him, a certain centralization, feeble and temporary it is true, taught the nation to think of itself as in some sense one; and this conception, despite the political severance that so speedily ensued, was never entirely lost. Bound up with it was that memory of past greatness which so often acts as a source of hope amid disaster, and which, even when based on fictions, keeps a nationality alive. Without the memory of David, it is hardly possible that the Jewish nation could have survived such crushing blows as the Babylonish captivity, the persecutions of Antiochus, the ruin under Rome, and the dispersion to the ends of the earth; and what the world would have lost if the Jews had been wiped out defies calculation. Nor is it only as a great conqueror that he is remembered. The Jews were by no means free from the almost universal folly that measures greatness by success in war; but that they had their wiser feelings is shown by the fact that the glory of David the Psalmist is fully as widespread as that of David the warrior. Nor is the *ideal* value of the hero in the least impaired by the discovery that few indeed of the poems attributed to him can be his. The poet of the Dirge on Jonathan and of the Eighteenth Psalm had set a standard of kingship to which it

would have been well if other kings had oftener tried to conform: and that the Jews so early recognized this is a proof of national sanity and due sense of relative values.

Finally, in David we see the beginnings of a kingship that aims at organization and discipline. Saul had left the people to go on as before, except that he took their most suitable young men to recruit his armies. In David's reign we find not only an organized force grouped round his chosen Six Hundred and his bodyguard of "Cherethites and Pelethites", but a Recorder, a Finance Minister, and a rough attempt at a civil service. In one point, indeed, he went too fast for his age. In his desire to take a census even Joab seems to have fancied he was moved by nothing but vainglory; and the people, not unnaturally, thought that Yahweh had maliciously stirred him up to the unpopular undertaking—an idea which was of course confirmed when a famine, shortly afterwards, seriously diminished the sinfully-registered population. But what would not be the gratitude of historians, if other kings had been equally sacrilegious!

Despite, then, the many cavils of modern writers, and the many deductions that even impar-

tiality must make, we remain of the opinion that the figure of David is one of those as to whose greatness the common voice and that of history ought to coincide.

CHAPTER VI

Solomon

Nothing in Jewish history is more remarkable than the contrast between the facts admitted, and even emphasized, by our authorities as to the reign of Solomon, and the view of the man which the same authorities held up before our eyes. They are too honest, and perhaps too simple-minded, to hide the truth; but they seem to be hypnotized by the prestige of the great sage and ruler of the popular legend into presenting him as *somehow*, after all, a man of almost superhuman powers. Thus, on the one hand, we have the tyrant, making the yoke of the people grievous; the organiser of a vast system of *corvées;* the oppressive exactor of ruinous taxes; and on the other hand the preternaturally wise king, endowed by Yahweh with knowledge and sagacity from his youth; master of all science from the cedar to the hyssop; the speaker of unnumbered maxims and the poet of a thousand songs; the judge of unequalled penetration; the

monarch whose renown for wisdom attracts from the ends of the earth the Queen of the South, and whose exhibition of his powers sends her back with the cry that report had not told her half the truth.

It does not follow that the judgment of the historians was altogether wrong. A man capable of creating the illusion of greatness must have *some* element of greatness about him, as the successful impersonator of an Othello must at least be a great actor; and the immense repute of Solomon, not dying with his death, but even increasing through the ages, points to something in the personality of the man which our saga-men vaguely felt, but which, like us to-day, they could not easily correlate with the known actions of his life.

Perhaps the explanation lies in this, that Solomon, far more than his great Ottoman namesake,[1] deserves the surname "Magnificent". He understood, as well as Louis XIV himself, the effect of external show upon vulgar and indeed upon enlightened minds; and he knew that a splendid court may impose, not merely on foreign nations, or on the courtiers themselves, but on the very people who are groaning under the taxation that main-

[1] I do not mean that "Magnificent" is an accurate rendering of the Turkish word. That word is truly appropriate to the great Solyman.

tains the splendour. As with Louis, it was not for years that the populace detected the sepulchre beneath the whitewash; and the full effects were not seen till the time of his successor.

The reign began, as we have seen, with a series of intrigues, and with the summary removal of possible rivals. Joab, the old supporter of Adonijah, Adonijah himself, and finally, Shimei, the hoary devotee of the house of Saul, were put out of the way; but in Oriental sultanates such deeds are expected, and to abstain from them is usually construed rather as folly than as clemency. In foreign affairs Solomon was far from a man of blood; he relied, like a Hapsburg, less on war than on diplomacy, and on marriages of political convenience. His chief successes of this kind were his close alliance with Hiram of Tyre and his union with the daughter of Pharaoh. He took care to conciliate the religious feelings of his wives and of their countries. As Henrietta Maria had her Catholic chapel in the midst of a fanatically Protestant people, so on Mount Olivet smoked the altars of Milcom and Chemosh—but with this difference, that there is no reason to think that at the time either Yahweh or his worshippers much resented the intrusion. The horror shown by the Deuteronomist

historian would have been unintelligible to the indifferent spirit of Solomon's own age. Nor can that age, so far as we can gather, have shown any particular repugnance to the king's policy, in continuance of that of his father, of encouraging the fusion with the Canaanites, which now begins to advance rapidly and steadily. The army of Solomon now has its full contingent of cavalry and chariots—arms which David had found necessary, but which before that time Yahweh had eschewed, and which, long afterwards, his more devoted followers still rejected:

> Some trust in chariots, some in horses,
> But *we* in the name of Yahweh our God.

Solomon's encouragement of trade and commerce seems to have been part and parcel of his policy of fusion; for the Hebrew, pure and simple, had no mercantile instincts, and his chief name for merchant was "Canaanite". That the Jew is now so closely associated with trade and finance is therefore due, in all probability, to his absorption of the once despised Amorite, Girgashite, and Perizzite. For foreign commerce, like all ancient Eastern monarchs, Solomon relied mainly on the Phœnicians, with whom he kept up a particularly close

connection; and it was to Phœnician "cunning workmen" that he trusted the task of teaching his own subjects. As for his external empire, he seems to have been too busy to watch it. Though his prestige was great, enemies stealthily consolidated their power around him, to break forth at the critical moment. Thus Reson, king of Damascus, quietly built up on the Abana and the Pharpar a kingdom which was to be a terrible danger to Israel in later years; and it would appear that Edom actually and openly revolted.

But the splendour of public works blinded the eyes of people to the hollowness of the foundation on which the power of the kingdom rested. The Temple, and the king's own palace, though not built without enormous expense to the people and much forced labour, seem to have exercised the same hypnotic force over Solomon's contemporaries as over his historians. They were unquestionably magnificent works of art, and that art Tyrian; they set an example of architecture to a nation that had hitherto known little of it; and they retained their glory long after they had ceased to exist. But, like the Taj Mahal or the Pyramids, they were built on misery; and at last the people came to see their real meaning. Similarly, the prodigious harem—al-

ways a source of prestige in Oriental countries—seemed to raise Solomon to a level with Pharaoh himself, and the people so viewed it—until at last they perceived that it too could not be maintained except at ruinous expense.

The discontent caused by the *corvées*, the taxes, and other exactions seems to have been reinforced by another cause. Solomon, rightly anxious to break down tribal feeling, but perhaps too hasty in his methods, divided the kingdom into prefectures which had as little to do with the old tribes as the Republican departments had to do with the old provinces, or Cromwell's Major-generalities with the old counties. It would seem that the times were not ripe for so sweeping a change; at any rate the exemption of Judah from the system was sure to cause ill-feeling in Ephraim.

All these discontents were encouraged by the Prophetic Order, which may now first have felt that antagonism to the priesthood which was to colour so much of later history. The establishment of the magnificent Temple in Jerusalem was sure to strengthen the position, and therefore the arrogance, of the central priesthood; and it would seem that Solomon, unlike his father, had no Gad or Nathan to maintain his influence with the rival

organization of the dervishes. Even before the death of Solomon, if we may trust the narrative, the prophets had been working against the dynasty; and their silent undermining power must have been great. Apparently they were at first embarrassed for want of a military leader. But they had, for once, the support of a party in the hierarchy itself—the body of local priests at the smaller sanctuaries, all over the kingdom, who saw with concern the growth of the great shrine at Jerusalem, and were therefore as willing to support a revolution as were the poor curés in France to aid the lawyers against the wealthy prelates. In such circumstances the leader was sure to arise. The eye of the chief prophet, Ahijah of the old sacred town of Shiloh, fell upon a man in whom all the qualifications seemed to meet—Jeroboam the son of Nebat, a member of the once primary tribe of Ephraim, a man of fearless energy and determination, and one whose devotion to the old cults would secure the support of the lesser sanctuaries.

Of Jeroboam we have two distinct accounts, one given in the Hebrew text, the other supplied by the Greek translators. It is, for once, the Greek version which seems the more ancient and trustworthy. Jeroboam's father died early, and from his

youth he had to support his mother. He thus learnt self-reliance and diligence; and Solomon, watching him as he toiled at the building of the fortress of Millo, detected his organizing and ruling capacity, drew him out of the throng, and set him over the *mas* or labour-tax of Ephraim. But Solomon, perceiving his ability, failed to see his ambition. He was now in precisely the office in which he could play on the Ephraimite jealousy of Judah; and he used his chance. True, he long concealed his designs. He presided over the fortification of Millo with such ability that he was long afterwards known as its builder; and the gratitude of Solomon enriched him, or allowed him to enrich himself. In his native town of Sarira[1] he lived like a semi-independent satrap; and we find him later turning the town into a fortress and actually in command of three hundred chariots. Such was the man whom Ahijah secretly visited, and to whom by a symbolic act he promised the rule of the Ten Tribes.[2]

By this time Solomon's eyes were opened, and he sent to arrest Jeroboam. But the pretender, who

[1] As Sarira is also given as the name of Jeroboam's mother, it may be that, in calling him her son, the historian merely means that this half-Canaanite city was his native place.

[2] The LXX puts this act later, and ascribes it to Shemaiah. In any case, it proves the complicity of the Prophetic Order in the plan of disruption.

may well have had his spies at court, anticipated the blow, and fled to Egypt. Here King Sheshonk or Shishak, seeing the policy of weakening the Middle Kingdom which blocked his way to the East, gave him his wife's sister in marriage. At Shishak's court there was already an Edomite prince, Hadad, whom he had attached to himself in the same manner; thus the Pharaoh had two thunderbolts ready to be loosed at any suitable moment.

While the storm-cloud was thus lowering over the kingdom, Solomon died; and it remained to be seen how his son Rehoboam would deal with this terrible crisis.

CHAPTER VII

The Disruption

No sooner was Solomon laid in his grave than Jeroboam, obtaining the willing permission of Shishak, left Egypt and put himself at the head of the discontented party. But he acted with consummate prudence and deliberation. Knowing the spell which the name of David still cast over the minds of the majority of the people, he as yet proclaimed no insurrection, but simply put forward, or induced others to put forward, a demand for a redress of grievances. He may, possibly, have known the character of the new prince well enough to be sure he would give the required handle to his enemies. At any rate, Rehoboam played into his hand precisely as he must have wished.

The ambitious soldier, the conspiring Prophetic Order, and the local hierarchies, as far as we can see, alike remained in the background, and left everything in the hands of the oppressed "proletariat". The victims of the "mas" and the tax-

gatherer assembled at Shechem, perhaps without knowing who had summoned them; and presented to Rehoboam the famous demand, "Thy father made our yoke grievous; now therefore lighten our yoke." The prince asked for delay, and once again Jeroboam showed his moderation by inducing the people to agree. At the council, unfortunately very briefly described, we can discern the wiser advisers urging that, if the populace were conciliated, Jeroboam would be helpless: they can scarcely have failed to suspect, or even to know, his real designs; but they also knew that as yet there was no widespread feeling against the house of David as such. The other party—the spirit of which is very much alive in our own times—relying on the army, and like all militarists believing that the only cure for social disorder is armed force, scorned conciliation, and drove Rehoboam along the fatal path of obstinacy. The words he used are Oriental; their substance is only too well known to the Western and modern world: "My father made your yoke grievous, but I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." Uttering these words, he sent Adoniram, the chief officer of the "mas", to coerce the people back to their task-work. It needed no

Jeroboam to rouse them, and it would have taken more than a Jeroboam, or even than Virgil's *vir pietate gravis*, to hold them in check. Adoniram was instantly stoned to death: and Rehoboam himself only saved his life by a hasty flight to Jerusalem. "All Israel" was now in the mood to accept the cry, "What portion have we in David? Neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: now see to thine own house, David." At this moment, so skilfully worked up to, it was made known that Jeroboam had returned; and the kingship was offered to him.

But the struggle was only beginning. The bureaucratic system of Solomon, and the well-organized army, were not to be broken down in a day. Once in Jerusalem, Rehoboam was able to gather his forces together, and in the war that ensued he had by no means the worse. It would seem that Jeroboam was driven out of his fortress of Shechem, and compelled to take refuge at Peniel beyond Jordan. Not even the influence of the Prophetic Order, which had helped to place him on the throne, seemed likely to be able to keep him there. We hear that Shemaiah the Enlamite went out to meet the hosts of Judah, and forbade them to go up against their brethren. "This thing," said he,

"is from Yahweh": and at least on one occasion Judah obeyed him. But the effect of his words was short-lived; and it appears that, at the end of five years of warfare, Jeroboam was on the verge of destruction. At this crisis, however, a formidable ally came to his assistance.

The policy of Egypt, in supporting pretenders in opposition to Solomon's dynasty, had of course aimed at the break-up of the powerful "Middle Kingdom" which parted the Nile from the Euphrates: it was dictated by no personal friendship for a Jeroboam or a Hadad, and would have been as ill-served by their complete success as by their total failure. While, therefore, Jeroboam was able to maintain the contest with Judah, Shishak gave him but little aid; but when his failure seemed certain, the Egyptian, seeing that delay might mean the re-establishment of Solomon's kingdom, marched into Judah with an overwhelming force. Taken thus in the rear, at the end of an exhausting conflict, Rehoboam had nothing to do but to capitulate. Shishak removed the "sinews of war" from Jerusalem, drew Jeroboam back from beyond Jordan, and returned to his land. He was, as we should expect, careful not to *destroy* the southern kingdom: but he had so weakened it that for the next

two hundred years it occupies but a secondary place in the history of Israel. Indeed, when we hear henceforward of Israel pure and simple, it means Israel without Judah.

Once confirmed in his throne, Jeroboam, with his usual ability, set to work to make his dominion secure. For this purpose he supported to the utmost of his power the northern sanctuaries against the Southern, and particularly those of Bethel and Dan against Jerusalem. In this, despite the representations of the Deuteronomist author of Kings, the innovation was not on his side, but on that of the South. The conception of one single place at which Yahweh was to be worshipped is the growth of a later time: and the resultant conception of "Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin" is later still. As for the golden calves and other images, the Ephraimite Jeroboam was but continuing the tradition of the Manassite Gideon and of all his predecessors. Every high place had its altar, every wood its "ashērah", every road its obelisk: the sanctuary of Dan with its "pesel" and its "massekah" had the prestige of immemorial antiquity, while that at Bethel was associated with the name of Jacob himself. To Ephraim, the Temple of Jerusalem must have seemed to be asserting claims ridiculous

by their novelty, and, after the disruption of the kingdom, devoid even of the sanction of force. That Jerusalem triumphed in the long run is due to circumstances with which she herself had little to do. But for the rise of an external power, which crushed Samaria to the dust, and with her Dan, Bethel, and the local shrines, it might well have been to Ephraim and not to Judah that we should trace the enlightenment of the world.

The Book of Kings has more to tell us of Jeroboam; but little that is historical. It gives us the beautiful story of the death of his son Abijah—placed in one setting in the Hebrew text, and in quite another by the Greek translators. This story may well represent an alienation between the king and his erstwhile friends of the Prophetic Order. But the extraordinary, and in parts very obscure, tale of the prophet from Judah and his slaying by the lion, has every sign of having grown up in the days of Josiah, in whose reign the "prophecy" was so exactly fulfilled. That Jeroboam cultivated the friendship of the local priests of the "high places", as we are told at the end of the thirteenth chapter, we may unreservedly believe. And that there was desultory war between him and Rehoboam all their days is exceedingly likely. Such a futile con-

test was not only almost inevitable in itself, but also exactly in accord with what we may conceive to have been the policy of Egypt.

But Jeroboam failed to found a dynasty. He failed, indeed, to transmit his crown even to that third generation which is the usual Oriental limit. His eldest son, Abijah, died young: it may be that his successor, Nadab, was one of those unhappy beings, "born in the purple", surrounded with flatterers from their babyhood, and therefore easy victims of the first military adventurer. Such, at any rate, was the fate of Nadab, nor does the historian waste many words of sympathy upon him. His place was taken by Baasha, who seems to have been an able warrior, and who prolonged his reign for twenty-four years—till, in fact, men had learnt to give his family some of the rights of prescription. But he too was to fail: and the "Deuteronomic" historian is once again inspired to moralise on the sins which had brought this judgment, if not on Baasha himself, yet upon his children. His son Elah peacefully succeeded him; but fell by a crime which became proverbially atrocious. The method of the crime was typical.

While the army was besieging the Philistine fortress of Gibbethon, the young king, like another

Nadab, was enjoying himself at home. The opportunity was seized by Zimri, the captain of his bodyguard, who—to judge from a comparison of one text with another—may have been a member of the family of Saul. He "slew his master" in the midst of a drunken revel, and, we are told, destroyed every single representative of the house of Baasha. Had he secured the army, this peculiarly thorough series of murders might have attained its end, and the line of Saul might have been reinstated: but this very thoroughness seems to have struck the officers with horror. The host broke up from Gibbethon, and advanced upon the royal city of Tirzah. Resistance was useless; and Zimri, driven to the very recesses of the palace, finally burnt himself to death rather than fall into the hands of his enemies. His "reign" had lasted one week; into which short space of time he had probably concentrated as much misery as many people see in all their lives; and "Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?" is a saying current through lands of which he had never heard.

Who should succeed him was a doubtful question; for all the royal houses had been extinguished. A civil war arose between Omri the chief general and "Tibni the son of Ginath": a war of which we

know nothing but the result. The people that followed Omri prevailed over the people that followed Tibni; so Tibni "died" and Omri reigned.

With the accession of this great man we enter a new epoch. Succeeding where his predecessors had failed, in founding a fairly stable dynasty, he launched Ephraim on a promising course, which for long seemed likely to bring her prosperity. With him therefore we may for a moment pause.

CHAPTER VIII

The House of Omri

The object of the author of the Books of Kings was not that of a modern historian. It was to preach a doctrine, and that the doctrine of his own age. To him, all failure, in battle or in politics, was Yahweh's punishment for sin; and the sin which brought the worst punishment was the worship of "other gods", or even of Yahweh himself in the wrong form or in the wrong place. Thus we constantly find kings censured for "not removing the Bāmōth or high places": though it is certain that, in the eyes of those kings and their people, no sin could have been worse than such a removal. In a similar spirit, a fanatical Protestant might censure St. Louis, or our own Henry VI., for not removing the monasteries or images of the saints from the countryside: but, whether Protestantism as such be true or false, such a censure would be as unjust as to blame Haroun-al-Raschid for being a Mahommedan. We need not, therefore, accept without reservation the denunciations of Omri in

which our author indulges; nor need we think that the ultimate destruction of his house proves the wickedness of its founder.

Moved by these feelings, the writer tells us very little about Omri; and we are left to gather from slight indications in Scripture, and from the Assyrian monuments, that he was in all probability one of the greatest kings that Israel ever knew. That man can have been no ordinary ruler whose name passed far beyond the bounds of his own kingdom and survived his own death by a century. In practically every Assyrian inscription, the name of Israel is Bît Humri, House of Omri, and that long after his time: nay, Jehu himself, the deadly destroyer of his family, is called by Shalmaneser "Omri's son". Equally significant is Omri's choice of a capital. Hitherto there had been no recognized seat of government in the Northern kingdom: the royal dwelling-place changed with the successive kings. But Omri was in search of something more than a palace. Seeing the commanding position of an estate belonging to a man named Shemer, he bought it, and built on it the Shômeron or Samaria that still survives. Thenceforward, till the destruction of the monarchy, Samaria was the unquestioned centre of Israel. And,

be it observed, it was a *new* city. Omri is almost the only *first* founder of cities of whom we hear in all Hebrew history. Others, even David in Jerusalem, were but the enlargers or refounders of places that had been built by earlier peoples. Not that Omri, or his successor, disdained re-founding. As a residence, rather than as a capital, Jezreel was rebuilt by Ahab. The site of Jericho had been, it was said, placed under a ban by Joshua, as, long afterwards, Carthage was cursed by Scipio Africanus: and the deserted ruins lay there, despite the natural advantages of the spot, a proof of the power of superstition. But Hiel the Bethelite, like Julius Cæsar with the great African city, refused to be bound by an imprecation uttered centuries before, and rebuilt Jericho. Though tradition asserted that the curse was fulfilled in Hiel himself, it is noteworthy that the Israelites did not hesitate to inhabit the accursed place.

Of Omri, beyond the usual statement of the Deuteronomic historian, that "he did evil in the eyes of Yahweh", we hear no more. We should be glad indeed to learn something clearer as to those evil deeds: but we may conjecture, at least, that one of them was that alliance with Tyre which, carried to its logical consequences by his son Ahab,

impressed itself so strongly on the imagination of Israel. The circumstances of Tyre were such as to favour an alliance. Ethbaal, the king, had just founded his dynasty—it is said by murder and craft of the worst kind—and he may well have felt his need of external support. It would seem that the actual marriage of Jezebel to Ahab took place after Omri's death. Never, in Israelitish history, was marriage more momentous; never was one celebrated with more pomp or higher hopes; and never, till the days of Marie Antoinette, did bride so proud fall into deeper ruin. Fortunately, also, never did royal wedding call to utterance a finer laureate. If we can trust the most probable interpretation of the forty-fifth Psalm, that splendid poem describes for us the union of Ahab and Jezebel. We see the bard, full of the enthusiasm of the Oriental, improvising so fast that the "nimble scribe" can scarcely keep pace with him: we hear him bidding the king gird on his sword and strike his enemies; we hear the praise of Ahab's ivory palace and stringed instruments; and we catch the boast that now the dynasty of Omri is secure:—

> As for thy throne, it is firmly founded,
> God hath established it for ages of ages.

But then we are shown the bride in all her splendour:—

All glorious is the king's daughter;
Of pearls in ouches of gold is her clothing;
In broidered apparel is she led unto the king:
A train of virgins her companions is brought unto thee.

Such was Jezebel in the first blush of her youth. It might have been well for her had she attended to the poet's exhortation, "Forget thine own people and thy father's house." But, as with the Austrian bride of Louis, that was precisely what she could not forget: and the "daughter of Tyre", too fond of Tyrian things, was to rouse against herself a passion of patriotic hatred which, perhaps unjustly, has made her name a by-word for ever.

Of Omri we know too little; of Ahab we know at once too little and too much. The story that has come down to us is full of detail, but it is the story as told by his deadly enemies the prophets. We can see, however, signs that even the prophets were not above tampering with the truth for their purposes. Ahab was no enemy of Yahweh. The poet, in his epithalamium, says, "God, *thy God,* hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness." His sons, so far as we know them, are called by the sacred name. Jeze-

bel may have the prophets of Baal feasted at her table; but Ahab consults those of Yahweh, and only ceases to consult Micaiah when he finds all his forecasts unfavourable. Nor was he without high and regal courage. Like Saul, he goes dauntlessly into a battle from which he knows he will not return alive; and when he feels the mortal wound stays himself in his chariot and stands heroically there until, the battle lost, he sinks down in a pool of blood.

Physically brave, he seems to have been politically weak: and unquestionably he was dominated by his imperious queen, who was far from remembering the laureate's injunction: "He is thy lord, and worship thou him." Jezebel, a stranger from Tyre, did not understand her new people; which, indeed, was now passing through a time of transition that might well have bewildered a native. The conception of Yahweh was altering. The local Baals, representatives of him in his varying capacities, were ceasing to satisfy some of the more inquiring minds; and when to them was added the national Baal of a foreign city, this dissatisfaction, aided by patriotism, rapidly intensified. And, to give voice to this feeling, there arose what we might almost call a new race of prophets.

It is difficult for the modern reader, studying an expurgated Bible in the light of civilization, to realize the enormous weight of superstition which hung over Israel throughout its whole history. Much, doubtless, was excluded from the sacred Books from the first; much more has been removed from them by the editors. Yet enough is left in the records to supply a Frazer with materials for three large volumes. We have to picture, then, a people living in the constant expectation of supernatural occurrences—and therefore finding them, the victim of taboos, prohibitions, and ghostly fears; "leaping over the threshold" to avoid one demon, consulting a Rôeh to circumvent another. At a little distance lives a Wise Woman of Tekoa, dangerous to meddle with, skilled in divining. In another place are those who, like Joseph, divine by means of a cup of water; here the terrible sorcerers who deal with "Ob" or the raising of the dead; there the Kôtem, or finder of omens by lot; there the yiddeôni man, who deals with familiar spirits. Everywhere, of course, you see persons armed against these evils: women wearing all the amulets, soul-boxes, nose-rings, and other talismans described in an indignant chapter of Isaiah; a priest with his magic bells to drive away the devils; a

warrior with charmed armour. Above all, in some hamlet a little removed from the town, was a school of "prophets" or dervishes. These men possessed the power of casting themselves into trances, in which—in a way not explained—they ascertained the will of Yahweh and foresaw the future. In a modern European they would excite but wondering disgust; and even in the more enlightened Israelites we can detect the same disgust, but mingled with a natural fear. So powerful was their influence that it occasionally seized on an unwary visitor like Saul, overcame him utterly, and stretched him for hours on the ground "prophesying"—that is, foaming at the mouth, wallowing to and fro, and uttering strange sentences of gibberish. Their actions at other times were less wild, but equally characteristic; they would wander in symbolic nakedness along the streets, or wear horns in sign that the Syrians should be pushed back as by an ox. Rightly were they called nebî-îm, or the Foamers; and in their calmest moments they were extraordinary enough never to be mistaken for anything but what they were. During the centuries at which we have arrived their power was immense. With the growth of morality and knowledge it declined. We find Amos, for example, care-

fully disclaiming the title of Nabi; and by the time of "Zechariah" the whole order had fallen into disrepute.

Yet it was from this class that the opposition to Jezebel's Baal-propaganda mainly arose, and by it that Jezebel was ultimately overthrown. From them, even less than from a wild Western Whig of 1680, were learning, culture, width of view, and tolerance to be expected; but they were capable of producing, at times, men of indomitable courage and even of real spiritual insight. Such a man was Elijah, of whom it has been well said that legend alone was capable of giving an idea of his greatness. At any rate, it is only legend that we possess. A kind of Saint's Life is suddenly flung at us, projected into the midst of Ahab's history, and dwarfing everything else in it. A second Melchizedek, he is without father and mother; we know nothing either of his birth or of his death; he appears before us as suddenly as before Ahab, and vanishes as he vanished from the eyes of Elisha. How much truth lurks behind these legends it is impossible to say; the tale of the slaughter of the priests of Baal on Carmel, with all its bigoted ferocity, is quite in character, and may well reflect some frightful outburst of savagery on his part.

But we know that Baal was not overcome by him —that task he left to be performed by his pupil and successor.

Elisha is to us more enigmatical even than his master; for the pictures of him, like that of Samuel, are irreconcilable, and point to the use of more sources than one by our author. The quiet miracle-worker, removing death from the pot, or restoring a lost axe to its user, is scarcely the courtier-prophet, consulted by kings and even by hostile generals; it is hard to see in the lodger at the house of the Shunammite the "chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof" whose approaching death King Joash laments as if it were the loss of a pitched battle. But, reconcile these contrasts as we may, we may yet see in Elisha the zenith of the prophetic influence. He is at once the soothsayer, the magician, the medicine man, and the statesman. After him, the Nabi takes on a new character, and develops on lines which would have been quite unintelligible to him.

Apart from domestic policy, the reign of Ahab is the story of the war with Aram, the power which Reson had established, around Damascus as its nucleus, in the time of Solomon. This power, despite many vicissitudes of fortune, seems to have

gradually broken down that of Israel beyond the Jordan. Truces varied the monotony of fighting. Of one of these we may perhaps see a vestige in the story of Jacob and Laban, where we learn that a temporary boundary was fixed between the two nations at Galeed or Mizpah; for amid all their quarrels Aram and Israel recognized their kinship. But, at last, as Aram left Mizpah far in the rear, and penetrated close to Ramoth Gilead, Ahab determined on a great effort. Summoning his vassal Jehoshaphat of Judah to his aid, he began his last march. It is here that the remarkable figure of the prophet Micaiah emerges, sudden as that of Elijah himself, into momentary light. Justly have commentators concentrated their attention on this strange apparition; for in him we see, not the colleague of Elijah or Elisha, but the precursor of a new kind of prophets, of Hosea, Isaiah, or Jeremiah himself; a man of true, if limited, insight into divine things, whose idea of God, crude as it is, has in it the germ of advance and the promise of a deeper revelation.

The battle of Ramoth Gilead, fulfilling the prophecies of Micaiah and Elijah, foreboded also the end of the dynasty of Omri. Ahab was succeeded by his son Ahaziah, who, falling ill and

consulting the god of Ekron, came under the wrath of Elijah, and never rose from his sick-bed. It is at this time that Yahweh not only becomes in truth a jealous God, but tends to extend his dominion over the neighbouring lands. Seeing that Ahaziah's brother and successor Jehoram still "walked in the ways of his father"—that is, still extended hospitality to the Baal of Tyre, Elisha and his party determined at any cost to remove the erring family. For this purpose they fixed upon Jehu the son of Nimshi, a prominent general in the Army. Anointed by a pupil of Elisha, Jehu put himself at the head of the Yahweh devotees, and by a series of murders, perhaps unequalled in atrocity, destroyed the whole family of Ahab, including the aged but indomitable Jezebel, from the face of the earth. But it must be noted also that, while anointing Jehu, Elisha was also anointing Hazael, an officer of Ben-hadad of Syria, to the kingship of that realm—an invasion on the part of Yahweh which would scarcely have been conceived possible in a previous age. We are, it is plain, passing slowly from the monolatry of David to the monotheism of later Judaism; and, though the passage is attended with hideous bloodshed, for which we must hold Elisha responsible, we yet can

not deny that in this respect he represents a forward and upward step.

Incidentally, before leaving this ill-fated family, we may mention that to this time belongs one of the oldest and most interesting of Semitic monuments—the Stone of the Moabite King Mesha. So far as the evidence of this stone goes, it presents us with a most valuable test by which we may judge the accuracy of the Hebrew accounts.[1] Not, of course, that we need accept at face-value the statements of Mesha himself; but the monument reminds us of what we may be inclined to forget—that there were other sides to every story we possess. The Stone gives us, however scantily, an indication that the Hebrew historians were no more free than Romans, Greeks, or Englishmen from the tendency to patriotic bias. When we find that to Mesha Chemosh was precisely what Yahweh was to Jehoshaphat, or that to him Moab was the land of light and Israel that of darkness, it behoves us, where we have no stone to help us, to be everywhere reminding ourselves that truth has many aspects, and that *one* aspect of truth is but little better than falsehood. For their patriotic bias the

[1] A short account of the stone is given in Appendix I.

Hebrew writers are not to be blamed; but blame would be justly ours if we accepted their accounts without submitting them to the strictest examination of which we are capable.

CHAPTER IX

The House of Jehu

No Jehad, no pogróm, ever exceeded in frightfulness the "holy war" waged by Jehu against the house of Omri and the holier war against the worshippers of Baal. That he should wage this second war was, indeed, the condition under which he received prophetic support; and that support he thoroughly earned. Not only did he slay Jehoram and Jezebel; not only did he constrain the chief men of Samaria to murder the "seventy sons of Ahab" who were living in that city; but he proceeded, by a mixture of violence and cunning, to make a total destruction of the cult of Baal, and thus gained the approval of the fanatical Elisha, as a Simon de Montfort gained that of a Pope by slaughtering the Albigenses. That he did not remove the local shrines shows clearly that as yet the people were far from any idea of the necessity of a single central worship; nor is there any reason to think that, while extirpating the great Tyrian

Baal, Elisha had any idea of interfering with the little Baals of hill, wood, and village. But, from this time onward, the *nationalizing* of Yahwism was practically complete; we hear hardly anything more of the worship of foreign gods in the Northern kingdom; and when we do hear of it, even in the Southern, it is always marked as exceptional.

In justice to the prophets, we must remember that the destruction of Baal and Ashtoreth meant in itself the removal of much immortality; for the rites of these deities were often hideous and revolting. But we find no trace of a desire on the part of the prophets to raise the *general* level of Israelitish life. Polygamy prevailed among the rich; concubinage was almost universal; the position of women was usually low; slavery was tolerated; and all this without, so far as we know, a single word of remonstrance from Elisha or the school which revered him as its leader. In other respects, also, the complete triumph of prophetism would have meant the retardation of culture; for its opposition to foreigners implied a hatred of trade, commerce, and learning, and a blindly conservative retention of the old exclusively agricultural mode of life. It was as well that its success stopped where it did.

Jehu's thoroughness in murder secured him from

domestic rivals; and his dynasty lasted even longer than that of Omri. His difficulties came not from malice domestic but from foreign levy. The able and unscrupulous Hazael, who had raised himself to the throne of Damascus at the same time, and by the same means as Jehu had utilized to seize that of Samaria, proved himself a terrible enemy. To counteract his energies, Jehu was forced to the dangerous expedient of calling in the aid of the rising power of Assyria. We find on the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser II an account of the "tribute of Yaua the son of Humi": gold vases, a gold cup, and sceptres; and in 842 B. C. the Great King speaks of a decisive defeat he inflicted upon Hazael in the Lebanon. Again, in 839, he attacked Hazael, and captured four of his towns. But—whether because of troubles in Assyria itself, or because Jehu withheld his "tribute"—Shalmaneser did not again assail Damascus; and Hazael soon recovered from the defeats so boastfully called decisive. Aided, as we learn from the book of the prophet Amos, by Moab and Ammon, Hazael and his successor carried their arms to the extremities of Gilead, crossed the Jordan, and, along a path marked everywhere by the signs of savage cruelty, approached within sight of Jerusalem itself. It seemed as if the

last days of Israel had come. But the national spirit was yet unbroken; and Elisha, with his band of Nebi-im, knew well how to arouse that spirit by religious stimulants. Jehu died, and Jehoahaz his son kept up the war. Jehoahaz died, and under Joash the tide turned. Three great victories checked the power of Syria, and fulfilled the dying predictions of Elisha. Yahweh, we are told, took pity on his people. To Joash succeeded a king of the highest ability and good fortune, Jeroboam II, in whose long reign of forty-one years the days of David seemed to have returned. Not content with defence, this great warrior turned to aggression. Assyria was for the time paralysed by constant revolts, and does not seem to have come further west than Damascus; it was thus possible for Jeroboam to undertake, with great hopes of success, the restoration of the ideal Middle Kingdom. Of the details we know little: but the words of our author are significant; "Yahweh saw the affliction of Israel, that it was very bitter; for there was none shut up nor left at large, neither was there any helper. And Yahweh said not that he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven, but saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash." To him, also, the prophetic order gave assistance. Jonah the

son of Amittai—to whose hand tradition has ascribed the curious and valuable specimen of later Jewish fable which enriches the collection of Prophecies—urged the people on by predictions of unprecedented success; and Jeroboam "restored the border of Israel from the Gates of Hamath to the sea of the Arâbah."

Fortunately, though the author of the Book of Kings contents himself with this brief summary, we are not without further light on this great reign. To it belong two contemporary works of immense interest and value—the prophecies of Amos and Hosea. A new prophetism, indeed, had arisen in the land, very different from that of Elisha and Elijah, and marking the longest step forward yet taken in the Hebrew religion. Providentially, also, these teachers—so far as we know—were the first to commit their exhortations to writing. It may be that the newness of their doctrine provoked hostility to the spoken word, and that they adopted the pen and the roll as a means of spreading it abroad in secret. Be that as it may, theirs are the first prophetic utterances which we are privileged to overhear as they proceed from the prophet's own lips. But more—we may repeat that the doctrine, like the means of its promulgation, was new.

Yahweh, to them, is not merely the god of Israel. No longer does his control stop at the border; according to Amos he has an eye upon the transgressions of Edom, Tyre, Philistia, as well as upon those of the "chosen people"; nay, he rules over Sheol itself, and will drag even from thence the fleeing sinner. But much more important than this gain in dominion is Yahweh's change of character. He has, to these great Reformers, become a *righteous* God, not to be propitiated by hecatombs, but to be served by a daily life of mercy and goodness. Woe to those who sell the poor for a debt, and betray the needy for a pair of shoes! The oppressor cannot escape the judgment by a sacrifice of sweet savour—punishment will pursue him to the ends of the earth, and can only be averted by repentance and restitution. We descry, in fact, a moral Deity.

Such preaching as this of course ran exactly counter alike to the worship at Dan and Bethel, and to the cults at the smaller local shrines; and it was inevitably displeasing to the priests and their ally the King. Amos, we know, came into sharp collision with the chief priest Amaziah; and it is certain that the preaching of Hosea cannot have been less offensive. But their work had its effect.

Their sermons, committed to writing, reached a wider audience than king or priest knew; and a set of authors, educated in their school, produced a history in which this view of God was inculcated by examples. This history, known to us by the convenient letter E, was later combined with the Judahite history of "J", and "JE" formed the basis of our Hexateuch.

From the works of Amos and Hosea, but especially from the former, we obtain a vivid picture of the state of things in Israel during the reign of Jeroboam. Despite success in war, or perhaps in consequence of it, there was every sign of degeneracy in the nation. Samaria was full of ostentatious wealth, suddenly acquired by the spoil of the conquered; and there is no more certain precursor of decay than wealth thus acquired. Tyranny, oppression, cruelty, abode in those ivory palaces, and lurked in the divans of those that were "at ease". Along with this abundance and luxury was grinding poverty, which the rich made no attempt to alleviate. As often, the wealthy women were as bad as their lords—"the cows of Basham," as Amos called them, devoured and trampled down as savagely as the bulls, trusting to sacrifices and donations to the priesthood for salvation. It needed no

clairvoyant power to see the inevitable end of all this. "Ephraim is joined to idols," said Hosea; "let him alone." The punishment would come, without the active intervention of Yahweh, by its own mere natural impulse; nor would oblations to any number of images avert it. The nation seemed senile, and confirmed in evil habit. "When Israel was *young,* then I loved him," said the Yahweh of Hosea; but *now,* nothing short of utter ruin can regenerate him.

Few things, indeed, can show more clearly the greatness of these new prophets than the fact that they refused to see in external victory the signs of the favour of Yahweh. Here, at least, they were ahead of their age, nay, of the succeeding age. But, while thus declining to worship victory, they were convinced that the hand of God was in *defeat;* and they foretold military disaster because they were certain that Yahweh's anger was kindled against the national sin. In thus anticipating ruin they were right; whether they saw from what direction it was to come is uncertain and unimportant.

The most probable date of the death of Jeroboam is 745. In that very year Tiglath-Pileser IV, apparently a military adventurer of genius, forced his way to the throne of Assyria, and instantly be-

gan a career of almost uninterrupted aggression and victory. First, he secured the vassalage of Babylon; Ararat, Arpad, Calneh, were next subjugated in quick succession; and at length the destroyer appeared on the borders of Israel. Even Jeroboam might have been unable to defend the country with success against such a foe; as for the actual rulers, they were helpless. A series of revolutions had paralysed Samaria. Jeroboam's son Zachariah was murdered by Shallum; Shallum in his turn was removed by Menahem, and Menahem, feeling insecure on the throne, was fain to strengthen himself by the fatal policy of paying tribute to Assyria. "From Menihimme of the city of the Samarians," says Tiglath-Pileser, "I received gold, silver, lead, iron, crimson fleeces, ivory, the treasure of a kingdom." The tribute saved Menahem for a while; but it caused much bitterness in his country, and drove the opposing party into the arms of Egypt. Thus the land became for the next hundred years the Belgium of the East; the unhappy battleground of two powers far mightier than itself. Menahem, it is true, died in his bed; but his son Pekahiah was slain by Pekah, who, though he renewed the tribute, was really opposed to the Assyrian policy.

During this last short reign (the "twenty years" of the Book of Kings is an error), Tiglath-Pileser for a while turned his attention elsewhere. Pekah seized the opportunity, allied himself with Rezon king of Damascus, and, to strengthen himself in the rear, attacked Ahaz king of Judah. The invasion was at first completely successful; Ahaz was in danger of destruction, and in his extremity appealed to the Great King, to whom he may have been already tributary. Tiglath-Pileser did not fail him. He fell like an avalanche on Damascus, ravaged the land "like a hurricane", chased Rezon "like a mouse" into his city, captured him and put him to death. From the trouble of doing similarly to Pekah, he was saved by the Hebrews themselves. A rebellion arose under Hoshea, and Pekah, driven out of Samaria by his disgusted subjects, was finally tracked down and slain. Hoshea paid to Assyria ten talents of gold and an unnamed amount of silver; in return for which he was confirmed on his vassal throne. The whole land, indeed, from Hamath to Gaza, submitted to Tiglath-Pileser; but, as is the usual case with submissions compelled by the sword, only waited for an opportunity to revolt.

The opportunity seemed to have come in 727, when the great conqueror died, and was succeeded

by Shalmaneser IV. Instantly almost every subject city threw off the yoke; and Hoshea, sending for help to Se-we king of Egypt, was among the first. But Shalmaneser was hardly less formidable than his predecessor; and Egypt, as always, was a broken reed. The armies of Assyria advanced into Palestine; the rebellious cities hastened to make their peace as best they could. Samaria, left to her own resources, was besieged. The ramparts of Omri were strong, and the siege lasted no less than three years. Shalmaneser himself died before the work was done; but at length it was taken by Sargon and destroyed. How much misery is summed up in these few words we are left to guess; but the allusions of later prophets prove the ghastliness of the destruction that left such a memory behind. The forebodings of Amos were fulfilled: "the city that went forth a thousand had a hundred left, and that which went forth a hundred had ten left: wailing was in all the broad ways, and those that were skilful in lamentation were called to wailing!" Well might it seem that the light of Yahweh was quenched in darkness; for his sole home now was the tiny and feeble principality of Judah, clinging precariously to the skirts of the poor and despised fortress of Zion.

CHAPTER X

The Southern Kingdom

Nothing blinds the judgment more than knowledge of the event. That Jerusalem still lives, while Samaria is little more than a name, conceals from us the fact that from the invasion of Shishak to the triumph of Sargon, the future, to human eyes, must have lain with Ephraim. During all those years, with few and short intervals, Judah was either a proclaimed vassal of the northern kingdom or a contemptuously tolerated inferior. Her history is indeed hardly worth study. The very list of kings is uncertain—we are not sure whether Abijam, for example, is not an imaginary name. It was not till the time of the Chronicler that the little realm began to gain victories and put on a post-mortem glory. The more sober narrative of the Books of Kings reveals Jehoshaphat as a feudatory of Ahab and Jehoram; "his people as their people, his horses as their horses." Ahaziah dangles at the Samarian court like a king of Saxony at the Con-

ference of Erfurt. Amaziah indeed throws off his allegiance; and the overlord answers him with a contemptous parable, "looks him in the face", scatters his army, and takes him prisoner. Uzziah's long reign is partially eclipsed by the contemporary rule of the great Jeroboam, and partly by years of miserable disease. It is only in the reign of Ahaz, the grandson of Uzziah, that the fearful disorders of the northern kingdom allowed Judah to play an independent part, however small, on the world-stage. How nearly this independence brought her to ruin, and how the ruin was avoided by the appeal to Assyria, we have already seen. We find Ahaz going in person to Damascus to meet his terrible ally; and Judah remained untouched while the arms of Shalmaneser and Sargon penetrated even beyond Philistia, drove Se-we of Egypt in headlong rout from Raphia, and even exacted homage from Cyprus.

Small as the kingdom was, it had some advantages over more powerful neighbours. In the first place, it lay off the great route through Esdraelon and the Shĕphēlah between the Euphrates and Egypt. In the second place, it was mountainous and in parts almost impassable to armies; and Jerusalem itself, chosen and fortified by so great

a soldier as David, and strengthened by successive kings, was impregnable except to attacks on all sides at once. Thirdly, the prestige of the dynasty, and the quiet wisdom of most of the rulers, saved Judah to a great extent from the palace-revolutions and murders which distracted Samaria. We cannot doubt, then, that when Ephraim fell, thousands of refugees from the northern kingdom came to the southern as to a haven of rest, and may have been employed in the building of fortresses and other military undertakings which still further defended a land already very strong.

But there was more than this. With the refugees came something of the neo-prophetic spirit of Hosea and his school; we know, for example, that the work of "E" came south to exert its silent influence. And, whether in consequence of this peaceful invasion or not, we find a great religious and political movement now arising in Judah, of which the great name of Isaiah is the chief representative. The fate of Samaria stirred Jerusalem to take stock of its spiritual and social state.

Isaiah first became alive to the impulses of Yahweh in the last year of Uzziah. His early preachings, during the reign of Ahaz, were directed against the same sins in Judah which, in

Ephraim, had provoked the denunciations of the herdman of Tekoa. But speedily he became far more than a preacher; being, apparently, of noble birth, he was admitted into the counsels of the king, and appeared as emphatically a statesman. During the invasion of Pekah and Rezon, his voice maintained the courage of the people, and his promises of speedy deliverance kept Ahaz to his task. With the accession of Hezekiah he became, in spite of bitter and unscrupulous opposition, the most influential man in the state. Along with him worked his contemporary Micah the Morashtite, a preacher whose actual contribution to religious advance is very hard to gauge, his genuine writings being almost inextricably intermingled with others of widely varying dates. If we could but trust the title-page, it is to Micah we owe the loftiest expression of spiritual thought in the whole Old Testament:—"Wherewith shall I come before Yahweh, and bow myself before the high God? Will Yahweh be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? He hath shown thee, O man, what is good: and now, what doth Yahweh require of thee but to do justice and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" And, whether this be really Micah's or another's,

enough that is genuine remains to show that there was in him a full measure of the spirit of Amos.

Everywhere, indeed, there was religious fervour of one kind or another. It is about this time that we first hear of a cult which the succeeding prophets are never tired of denouncing—the worship of the heavenly bodies; and, in the agony of his terror, Ahaz is even said to have sacrified his own children to Moloch. It is safe to say that everyone prayed to *some* God.

No wonder that, with the accession of the new king Hezekiah, a great effort was made to secure the favour of the national deity; and, for the first time in Jewish history, an attack was made upon the local Baals, the "high places", and the "asherahs". With the new conception of Yahweh as not only the god of Israel but the king of all the earth, these representations of him appeared to advanced thinkers as not only inadequate but idolatrous. Hezekiah's efforts went far; he even destroyed the Brazen Serpent whose origin was ascribed to Moses himself—calling it punningly not *nahash,* serpent, but *nehushtan,* brass. But against the local altars his assaults were vain; and even the foreign cults, though more or less suppressed in his life-time, revived with double strength under his son Manasseh.

The testing-time for these reforms was not long in coming. In 705 the young and ambitious Sennacherib succeeded his father Sargon; and twenty years followed in which the world was shaken even more terribly than under Tiglath-Pileser himself. Here, with the Assyrian monuments to correct the Jewish records, and to be in turn corrected by them, we are able to piece together a more detailed and more accurate narrative than has hitherto been possible.

Among the many towns enumerated by Sennacherib as subject to him, Ekron was one. Over this city Padi was king, and "faithful to the oath and agreement he made with the land of Asshur". But the Egyptian party, secretly conspiring, deposed him, threw him into fetters, and then handed him over to Hezekiah for safe custody. Hezekiah accepted the dangerous gift, and thus provoked the wrath of the Assyrian. Sennacherib advanced into Philistia, and there met the host of Egypt and its allies, which had come to the help of the Ekronite revolters. In the great battle of Eltekah which followed, Asshur gave the victory to his servants; the Egyptians were routed, and the sons of Pharaoh were made captives.

Now came the turn of Jerusalem. Hezekiah

realized too late the consequences of his deed; he sent to Sennacherib at Lachish, owning his error, paying an enormous indemnity, and giving back Padi into his hands. All this, however, did not satisfy the vengeful conqueror. Setting Padi back on his throne, and giving him a wider feudatory dominion than before, he turned against Judah. "Forty-six strong cities, with innumerable fortresses and small towns, I besieged and took. Two hundred thousand people I drew forth and counted as spoil. As for Hezekiah, him I shut up like a caged bird in Ursalimma, the capital of his dominion. His cities, which I had taken, I handed over to Mitintu king of Ashdod, Padi king of Ekron, and Silli-bel king of Gaza. At length, fear of my magnificence struck him, and he sent me thirty talents of gold, eight hundred of silver, male singers, female singers, and all things whatever their name, in sign of homage."

Of all this, naturally enough, the Book of Kings tells us hardly anything. We are indeed told of friendly relations between Merodachbaladan, the revolted king of Babylon, and Hezekiah; relations which must have exasperated Sennacherib even more than the treatment of Padi. But none would imagine, from the Biblical language, how dire was

the vengeance of the Assyrian, and how deep the humiliation of the Jewish ruler. On the other hand, on what happened in a *second* expedition, or at a later stage of the same, the Great King, equally naturally, is quite silent; for this is the campaign which ended in one of the greatest disasters known to history. There is no need to recapitulate the narrative, which may well be from the very hands of the eye-witness Isaiah. Whether in a sudden fit of repentance for the recent shameful submission, or tired out by years of thraldom, Hezekiah again asserted his independence. Sennacherib was on the march to Egypt when the news came; and, unable for the moment to vent his rage in person, he sent some of his chief officers to demand reparation. The speech of the "Rab-shakeh" or Master of the Cup-Bearers was skilfully framed; among other rhetorical devices he made use of the fact that Hezekiah's attacks on the local images were by no means universally popular, while he also claimed, like a Napoleon professing Mohammedanism, that his lord Sennacherib was but the chief servant of Yahweh, and the instrument of his vengeance. But Rab-shakeh failed utterly. Against him stood Isaiah, who had been disgusted and saddened by the

previous surrender. He would now have no truckling with the foe; and he ventured on the daring prediction that Sennacherib not only would fail to take the city but even would not besiege it. It was a bow drawn at a venture; but it gloriously hit a mark the archer can never have meant. Shortly afterwards the "Angel of Yahweh"—the pestilence that ever dogged the camps of ancient armies—went forth and slew "a hundred and eighty-five thousand of them"—a number there is no reason to think greatly exaggerated.

The Jews never forgot this deliverance. It was to them what Salamis was to Athens, or the defeat of the Armada to England. The memory of it survived the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, and inspired many a triumphant paean both at the time and for centuries later. It may even have had a bad effect; it seems to have left in Jewish minds the conviction that, whatever the strength of the besieging hosts, Jerusalem would never fall.

From describing this great event, the historian "jumps o'er times" to narrate the end of the chief enemy. It cannot have been till some years later that Sennacherib, like so many an Assyrian tyrant,

fell to a native sword. "Adrammelech and Sharezer, his sons, slew him as he was worshipping his god: and Esar-haddon his son reigned in his stead." Long before this, Hezekiah had been gathered to his fathers.

CHAPTER XI

The Fate of Jerusalem

The "reforms" of Hezekiah, which were largely premature, provoked the inevitable reaction. As the hasty iconoclasm of Somerset provoked the return of Catholicism under Mary, so the destruction of the local shrines, incomplete as it was, caused the pendulum to swing back under Manasseh.

We have no writing left us from Manasseh's side. His party failed, as it deserved to fail; for it was not the party of religious progress. But it does not follow that there was nothing to be said for him in his own day; and those who know what we should think of the Emperor Julian if we had only the accounts of his enemies, will be slow to accept all that the opponents of Manasseh have said against him. His name became a by-word for cruelty; he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, and Yahweh, in wrath, brought the destruction of the city (which by the way was nearly a century

later) upon Israel as a punishment for his crimes. Nay, the name Manasseh was used to fill a gap when it was necessary to speak of a villain; and the priest of Dan, who really descended from Moses, was traced to this unhappy champion of a ruined cause.

That he removed some of his enemies by the sword is likely enough; we have not left the age of Jehu behind us even yet. The tradition is strong that the aged Isaiah was among his victims; and it is not at all improbable that the old foe of Sennacherib may have opposed not only the restoration of the Baals and the cult of foreign gods, but the policy of submission to Esarhaddon. He may, indeed, have been the Raleigh demanded of the Jewish James by the Assyrian Gondomar. But that in this submission, at least, Manasseh was right, would not have been denied by Jeremiah, and will hardly be denied to-day.

A tradition, recorded by the author of "Chronicles", exists to the effect that Manasseh, revolting against his overlord, was captured and carried to Babylon, where he repented, and whence Yahweh brought him back to Jerusalem. Most of the Chronicler's unsupported statements are worthless. For this statement there is perhaps some colour

in the fact that during his reign Esarhaddon was master of Babylon, and in the fact that it is not *inconsistent* with the story of "Kings". At any rate, true or false, it produced for us the fine Apocryphal work, the "Prayer of Manasseh". It may, on the other hand, have been due to the Deuteronomic idea that a long reign, ending in a peaceful death, can only be secured by the service of Yahweh. And that an unrepentant Manasseh could have ruled for fifty-five years, and quietly left his kingdom to his son, was inconceivable to a Deuteronomist.

The reign of his son Amon, on the contrary, was precisely adapted for a Deuteronomist sermon. It was "wicked", i. e. the reaction was continued—and it was therefore short. Amon was murdered after two years, and was succeeded by his son Josiah—a child of eight. That the reaction, however, was not unpopular seems to be indicated by the fact that "the people of the land" slew the murderers of Amon, and, by some visible act of election, set his son, baby as he was, on the throne of David.

The thirty-one years (639–608) that follow are in some respects the most important we have yet had to describe; indeed, they are of vast import-

ance in the history of the world itself. In the first place, they saw the fall of Nineveh. The reign of Asshur-bani-pal, perhaps the greatest of all the Assyrian kings, warrior, scholar, statesman—the "great and noble Osnappar" of Ezra—closed in 626: and it was soon plain that the days of the "bloody city" were numbered. The prophecy of Nahum, a mixture of splendid descriptive poetry with ferocious lust of vengeance, gloats savagely over the coming doom, and, with an insight sharpened by hatred, anticipates with marvellous exactness the very details of the destruction. But the end was not quite yet. A still more fearful enemy invaded the lands between the Rivers, and drove away Cyaxares, the Median king, from his expected conquest of Nineveh. Of this Scythian inroad the Jewish historians tell us, directly, nothing; but the allusions of the poets show clearly the awful desolation the savages left in their trail—a desolation comparable only to that left by an Attila or a Timour. Irresistible by their numbers and their terrifying appearance, they marched victorious from Russia to the borders of Egypt, from which the trembling Psammetichus contrived to buy them off. What a ruin must that have been which made the inhabitants of the lands look back

longingly to the days of Tiglath-Pileser or Sennacherib!

It is possible that once again Jerusalem was saved by its position from the presence, if not from the terror, of these horrid foes. When they passed, as speedily as they came, from the countries they had desolated like a cloud of locusts, we find Josiah still reigning, and Jerusalem still standing. The relics of the nations resumed their tasks: the Umman-manda or Medes united with Nabopolassar of Babylon to destroy Nineveh, and Josiah proceeded with his business of overthrowing the Baals and the worship of foreign gods.

The story of this achievement is very remarkable. Despite the departure of the Scythians, and the approaching fall of Nineveh, a settled gloom pervaded the minds of men, a gloom well reflected in the writings of Zephaniah, in which for the first time we read of the "Day of Yahweh" as impending over the land:—

A day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress,
A day of wasteness and desolation,
A day of clouds and thick darkness,
A day of the trumpet and alarm,
Against the fenced cities,
And against the high battlements.

Such being the feeling of the people, and even of men of princely birth like Zephaniah, we are not surprised to hear that in the year 622 the king endeavoured to avert the wrath of Yahweh by repairing the "breaches" of the Temple, which were doubtless due to the neglect of the last half-century. Perhaps in consequence of the clearing made by the workmen, Hilkiah the priest lighted upon a book which, in the bad days of Manasseh, had been hidden in the Temple recesses for safety. Something in the roll struck Hilkiah, and he handed it to Shaphan the royal secretary, who read it before the king. Shaphan cannot have proceeded far before the king recognized in the book the words of Moses himself, undoubtedly revealed by Yahweh to make known his will at this decisive hour of fate. As the scribe read on, it became more and more clear that the sacred law had been continually disobeyed; and that the plagues written in the book must therefore be endured, unless by some means Yahweh could be still further propitiated.

The book, as a matter of fact, was the central portion of that known to us as Deuteronomy. That it was actually found in the way described and not placed in the Temple by a pious fraud of Hil-

kiah's, to be unearthed as if by accident, there is no real reason to doubt. The book bears every mark of having been written in the days of Manasseh by some prophet or priest who regarded that king's crimes as the certain way to "provoke Yahweh to anger" and bring ruin on the land, and who therefore drew up a list of the sins that were being committed, in the form of a list of sins of which Yahweh had said, "Thou shalt not commit them". Whoever he was, he was a preacher who knew, like Charles Fox, that repetition is the be-all and end-all of oratory and whose style has no obscurities or perplexities, but is intelligible at once to the plainest hearer. No wonder that, at the first recitation, Josiah "rent his clothes", and sent forthwith to the nearest prophetess, Huldah the wife of the keeper of the robes, for advice in the terrible emergency.

Huldah's reply was not encouraging. Whatever the king did, the doom was certain. All that she would promise was that the king himself, "whose heart was tender", should not himself see the ruin, but should be gathered to his grave in peace before the coming of the evil day. But Josiah was not deterred. The country should, in a last desperate endeavour to placate Yahweh, be cleansed of

everything as to which the "book of the law" had uttered its fear-inspiring "Thou shalt not". "Never was such a sudden scholar made"; never, alas, came reformation with a worse flood of cruelty. Mercy, of course, was a crime against God; and no mercy was shown. The shrines, of course, were broken down; the chariots of the sun were burnt with fire; the valley of Tophet, the seat of Moloch-worship, was defiled; but this was not all. The priests of the forbidden rites were sacrificed upon their own altars, and the very bones of the dead were rooted out of the graves and scattered to the winds. After this fearful purification, the thoroughness of which even a Jehu might have envied, Josiah returned to Jerusalem, and kept a Passover the like of which had not been known in the days of the Judges, or in the days of the kings of Israel, or in the days of the kings of Judah. If ever a deity could be propitiated, he intended to propitiate Yahweh.

But all was vain, and it is impossible not to feel a pang of pity for those who, relying on false words supposed to be inspired, toiled so indomitably and renounced even the merciful promptings of their hearts, for nothing. Deuteronomy's "That thy days may be long in the land" is not a true philosophy. Victory in war is not always the re-

ward of virtue. The children of this world are not always vanquished by the children of light. And when the holy king himself fell, in the flower of his days, in a last battle with the heathen, great must have been the bewilderment, savage the revulsion.

Now that the Ninevite lion lay dead,[1] the greater kings whom he had kept in terror began to divide his skin. Among these was Necho king of Egypt, who conceived the idea of adding Syria and Palestine to his dominions. Advancing with a huge army along the familiar path, through the Philistine lowlands and into the plain of Esdraelon, he accomplished, for the time being, his aim. But the policy of the prophets who supported Josiah in his religious changes was ever against Egypt, reliance on which had been the ruin of Samaria, and had been repeatedly punished by failure in war. No Deuteronomist, in fact, could for a moment think of trusting such a broken reed. Whether Josiah was already bound to the rising power of Babylon or not, he was sure to oppose Necho. He went out, accordingly, and met the Egyptian host at Megiddo. There, despite his precautionary disguise, a fatal arrow struck him, and the sun of Israel went down in endless night. The mourning of that time

[1] The date has recently been put back from 606 to 610 B. C.

was never forgotten; the dirge of Jeremiah over Megiddo was sung for centuries; when poets had exhausted all their similes for woe they recurred to the "keening of Hadad-Rimmon" as the saddest in human memory; and the seer of Revelation, casting about for a parallel to the last battle between good and evil, could find none so apt as Armageddon. But the bewilderment was even greater than the grief: how could Yahweh have allowed it to happen? How could things have seemed so "otherwise" to God? Never, surely, did faith receive so staggering a blow. As for the enemy, he had indeed cause to blaspheme: Deuteronomy seemed utterly discredited, and the party of Egypt received an encouragement which, surviving all rebuffs, contributed in full measure to the coming overthrow.

All this was felt to the utmost by the last, and in many respects greatest, of the earlier line of Jewish prophets. Less poetically gifted than Isaiah or Nahum, less commanding than Elijah, less statesmanlike and courtly than Elisha, Jeremiah had qualities in which all these were wanting, and which capture our interest after more than two thousand years. He is the most tragic of the prophets, the Euripides of that great succession, human

with his tears and his misfortune—a man to whom nothing in man's fate is alien.

In theology, Jeremiah combined Amos and Deuteronomy, and no disaster could shake his belief. In politics, he was a consistent opponent of Egypt, and not even Megiddo could move him. Not that he kept his politics apart from his theology—to him, as to every Hebrew, they were one. With the accession of Jehoiakim—for Jehoahaz, the anti-Egyptian successor of Josiah, was forthwith deposed by Necho—Jeremiah at once became a leader of the opposition. His pleadings were for a long time vain; and the roll of his prophecies was contemptuously cut to pieces by the King with a penknife and thrown into the fire. But, in 604, four years after the death of Josiah, events came to aid him.

After the fall of Nineveh in 610, Nabopolassar of Babylon, who had borne the chief part in the destruction of the tyrant-city, sprang at once into greatness. Some time was spent in consolidating his dominion, and then, in 605, his son Nabukudurutsur, better known by the corrupted Hebrew name of Nebuchadnezzar, was sent to deal with Syria and Egypt. Near the old Hittite fortress of

Carchemish on the Euphrates, the decisive battle with Necho was joined—and the war was over. In a few vigorous stanzas an ode of Jeremiah describes the ruin, and sums up the cause of Necho's failure in the striking phrase, "Pharaoh king of Egypt is but a noise; he hath let the opportune moment pass by." From that day, we are told, Necho never again ventured into Palestine. Jehoiakim yielded to the logic of facts, and submitted to the conqueror.

But, with that besotted reliance upon Egypt which characterized the dominant party, Jehoiakim broke faith with Nebuchadnezzar; and the Chaldean armies were let loose upon him. What they were like we may learn from the prophecies of Habakkuk: "a bitter and hasty nation, terrible and dreadful, that pass through the breadth of the earth to seize dwelling-places that are not theirs; their horses are more swift than leopards, and more fierce than evening wolves; they gather captives as the sand." Nay—if we may thus interpret an obscure phrase—they made a god of their own might. Not long could Jehoiakim resist such warriors: they came up, laughing at kings and deriding princes, to besiege Jerusalem. Ere the siege had lasted long, the king mysteriously perished—guesswork alone knows how; and it was left for his

young son Jehoiachin to make terms with the enemy. Three months was the unhappy lad tossed about between one faction and another, between hope and despair. At length, with his mother Nehushta, he went out of the gates, and, with every Oriental sign of submission, yielded himself to the Babylonian king.

Nebuchadnezzar, who, though a great fighter on occasion, was by preference a statesman and a builder, as well as a man of true piety to the gods, behaved with what to his captains may well have seemed leniency. He carried away the king and the princes to Babylon, and broke the power of the city by removing a large part of the army, while the sinews of war were destroyed by the sacking of the Temple treasures. But it would appear that the thoroughness of the destruction has been somewhat exaggerated by the historians; the numbers given in different places do not agree; and there was still much left to be gleaned ten years later at the end of the final siege. Be this as it may, the captivity of Jehoiachin was an era to the Jews, and ranked in their minds as the real end of the monarchy of David.

Over the relics of the kingdom Nebuchadnezzar placed another son of Josiah as a vassal king, exact-

ing from him a very stringent form of oath, and symbolically changing his name from Mattaniah to Zedekiah—Justice of Yahweh—as though to mark still further the tremendous obligation by which he was bound. Never was a youth—Zedekiah was but twenty-one years of age—in a less enviable position. Left just strong enough to be a useful buttress to Babylon against Egypt, he could move neither hand nor foot without the permission of his suzerain. On the other hand, the Egyptian party was still powerful; by far the majority of the prophets, inspired by the memory of Isaiah's triumph over Sennacherib, and warned by the fate of Josiah, belonged to this party; and the voice of Jeremiah was almost the only one that was loudly raised for the maintenance of the treaty with Babylon. Egyptian agents, doubtless, were quietly at work in the city; and it was easy to represent Jeremiah as pro-Chaldean, unpatriotic, or actually a bribed traitor. The truth was that patriotism, in the strict sense, was then impossible. The land *must* be the dependant of one great power or the other; and Jeremiah had rightly gauged the weakness of Egypt as compared with the energy and rapidity of Babylon. So long as Nebuchadnezzar lived, it was humanly certain that the Euphrates must prevail

over the Nile; and Jeremiah, to whom this was a first axiom, despaired as he saw that others could not even now see it—nay, that they were gradually blinding the eyes of the king to it. For Zedekiah himself one can have no feeling but utter pity. "Born in the purple," and therefore from birth deprived of the chances, which luckier people enjoy, of discriminating between the friend and the flatterer; deafened by a crowd of prophets, all crying, "Thus saith Yahweh", but with no mark on them to tell him which was false and which was true; urged one way by one counsellor and another way by another; receiving this oracle from that clairvoyant and that oracle from this; the poor inexperienced youth, in an agony of bewilderment and distraction, rushes this way and that, now imprisoning Jeremiah and now secretly visiting him; now shaking with terror and now daring all with the fool-hardiness of fear. Till the days of Nicholas II there is scarcely such another picture of a paper boat in the sea of fate. At length—perhaps provoked by some Chaldean insult, or, more likely, misled by some prophet of the type of Hananiah, the poor creature yielded to the Egyptian party, and broke his oath of allegiance. Thenceforward, to all his other distractions was added the pang of

an evil conscience. Willingly would he have retraced the fatal step, but he knew not how. Amid all the din of war we hear his despairing cry, "I fear the Jews that have fallen away to the Chaldeans, lest they deliver me into their hand, and they mock me." Once again the armies, swifter than leopards, fiercer than evening wolves, gathered round Jerusalem. Within the city the air was filled with the discordant cries of croaking prophets. The one party still howled that Yahweh would never desert his abode; the other, led by Jeremiah, advised submission at any cost. For a while, the optimists seemed likely to prevail. Pharaoh was still "a noise"; the rumour of his approach forced the assailants to raise the siege. But the respite was short. The rumour proved as usual empty; the Chaldeans returned. Even now Jeremiah, confiding in the forgiving nature of Nebuchadnezzar, urged Zedekiah to submit; but in vain, and the inevitable doom drew daily nearer. No angel smote the besiegers with pestilence; the famine within the walls grew more and more horrible. At length, driven to the last extremity, the king slipped out between the lines, and fled to the "Arābah". But Nebuchadnezzar had allies in Edom and Moab, which now saw the chance of vengeance for many an injury.

Informers told the Chaldeans of his whereabouts; the cavalry pursued him and captured him with all his train. He was sent to Riblah, where the Great King was awaiting the end of the siege. There could now be no mercy. Even to Jews the savage penalty seemed but justice. His children were slain before his eyes—and that was the last sight he was ever allowed to look upon.

As for the city itself, its walls were broken down, the last relics of the Temple treasures were seized, the greater buildings were burnt with fire, the holy house was defiled, and laid on heaps, the heathen came into the inheritance of Yahweh. The party of Egypt was put to the sword, the whole higher class received life, but at the price of transportation to Babylon, and only the poor remained, to starve or live as chance should decree.

CHAPTER XII

The Captivity

Over the miserable remnant of Israel Nebuchadnezzar, ever calm and wise, set one of the "Jews who had fallen away to the Chaldeans", Gedaliah the son of Ahikam. Gedaliah's business was gradually to pacify the country, to sweep it clear of the bands of "Free Companions" that roved from place to place in search of murder and loot, and to assure the mass of the people that the Great King was satisfied with his vengeance, and would allow them, as long as they gave no trouble, to pick up such a livelihood as the ruined land could afford. To Jeremiah, whose position the Babylonians understood and respected, leave was given to go where he would. With the patriotism which, though so often misinterpreted, was the deepest feeling of his nature, he chose to stay with his fellow-countrymen in their misery. It is all too likely that the decision was his death.

Scarcely any destruction is so complete but that

some avoid it. Among the members of the royal house of Judah who had escaped the sword of Nebuchadnezzar or the more terrible hatred of the Moabite and Edomite, was Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, who, with a few desperate companions kept himself alive by wandering from one unfrequented place to another. Such a life does not tend to a calm or philosophic outlook; every day he would hear of another friend slain or worse than slain—captured and sold to the rapacious slave-dealers of Tyre; and his heart, not unnaturally, became fuller and fuller of fanatical hatred against Babylon and against those he would regard as traitor-Jews. As soon as he heard that Gedaliah was established at Mizpah, he took ten desperadoes with him, and by pretence of friendship beguiled the Governor into security. "Then arose Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and smote Gedaliah the son of Ahikam." Nor content with this, he killed all the Jews who were with him, and eighty others who happened to be coming that way to bring offerings unto Yahweh. Nay, as if to make reconciliation with Babylon still more impossible, he massacred at the same time all the Chaldean soldiers who were with the Governor. This was of course an inexpiable crime in the eyes of Nebuchadnezzar; and

though it was instantly avenged by John the son of Kareah, a general of the Chaldeising Jews, yet even John was afraid that the Great King might now be stirred to wipe out the offending nation entirely. He therefore came to Jeremiah, in the hope that the oracle would urge flight to Egypt. Nothing can exceed the pathos of the words of John and his followers: "We would see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor have hunger of bread; and in Egypt would we dwell!"

The prophet waited ten days for the word of Yahweh to come to him—what would we not give to know exactly *how* it came!—and then spoke. Yahweh forbade their departure. Who can wonder that the weary multitude, sick of endless battle and massacre, refused to obey? They took Jeremiah with them, and at length reached Tahpanhes. The Exodus seemed reversed. Yet even in that refuge, if we may trust the last recorded words of the prophet, famine, war, and desolation still pursued the unhappy fugitives. Death must have come to them as a relief. According to one of the traditions that have reached us, it was at Tahpanhes that the life of Jeremiah, so long preserved through a thousand dangers, at length ended. The last of the prophets, like the first of the Christian martyrs,

was stoned to death by his countrymen. With him, it might have seemed, perished the Jewish nation.

Yet amid all these dire disasters the indomitable race refused to despair. It is now that we begin to hear the first whispers of the Messianic hope—the anticipation of some great descendant of David who should restore the kingdom to Israel, and break in pieces the rod of the oppressor. Even Jeremiah had left behind him prophecies of such a hero; and other preachers soon arose to give the hope a fuller and clearer expression. The old order of prophets was indeed dead: we find no one now to revive the memory of an Elijah or an Isaiah. But the new order—the Ezekiels, the Obediahs, and the nameless poets whose work fills up the roll of Isaiah's prophecies—knew well how to strike the note of consolation. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people," cries the "Evangelical" poet of the Exile. "Saviours shall come up on Mount Zion," says Obadiah, "and the kingdom shall be Yahweh's." "The dead bones rose on their feet, an exceeding great army," says Ezekiel. The refugees in Egypt, the scattered remnant in Judea, the exiles in Babylon, all alike saw in vision the feet of them that brought the good tidings.

As the new poets were different from the old,

so their methods became different. We pass gradually from the sermon to the vision, from prophecy to apocalypse. We can trace the beginnings of this change in the very marked and characteristic writings of Ezekiel, a contemporary of Jeremiah, who had watched the succession of disasters from his place of exile on the river Chebar. Like Jeremiah he traced the disasters to the sins of the people, and like him looked forward to a restoration when the sins should have been expiated; but he communicated his ideas chiefly by means of a series of symbolic visions. No doubt he really saw them. As Milton saw his Paradise all the more clearly when his bodily light was quenched, so Ezekiel, blinded by the tremendous catastrophe that had overwhelmed his people, saw the brighter future all the more clearly with the inner eye, and pictured for his countrymen a restored Temple and a rebuilt city—nay, he gave them the very measurements, and mapped the whole land out for them like an inspired surveyor.

Ezekiel was a priest, and thought like a priest; but the same message was proclaimed by others who had nothing priestly in them. Such was the great nameless prophet whose conception of the suffering servant of Yahweh, so precisely adapted to console

the men of his own time, has—by a process of lucky misinterpretation—been seized on by the Christians and made the vehicle of consolation to millions who have no idea of its original meaning.

Thus it was that a series of frightful calamities, which would have broken any other nation that ever existed, failed to destroy the Jews. Thousands, of course, conformed to heathenism and were absorbed; but a nucleus remained, like the "substance of a teil tree or an oak", to return when the due time came and to build up anew the worship of Yahweh. In one respect, at least, the Captivity was bound to strengthen that worship; for among the exiles, who comprised all the more educated of the nation, it inevitably broke the spell of the local shrines and little Baals; while as for the foreign gods, those who saw them at close quarters either bowed down in their temples and were absorbed by the conquerors, or, refusing to conform, increased daily in hate of them. Hence, as has often been observed, "idolatry" ceased after the Babylonian captivity. The evils that thenceforward assailed the Jewish church were no longer those of too great receptivity, but those of narrowness, exclusiveness and fanaticism. It is to this period that criticism rightly ascribes the composition of that "Priestly

Code" which, subsequently worked into the histories of J and E, forms so important a part of our Hexateuch; and which, by its insistence on rigid ceremonial observance, helped materially in keeping the Jewish exiles separate from the surrounding peoples. Amid all their afflictions, the "suffering servants" of Yahweh looked ever more eagerly and confidently for the promised deliverance. During the reign of Nebuchadnezzar it was, of course, only in the distant future that these hopes could build their shadowy habitation, and the Great King lived for twenty-five years after the destruction of Jerusalem, enjoying for the most part a peace secured by his immense prestige. When he died, in 561, however, the signs of change became apparent. His son, Awel-Marduk, drew Jehoiachin out of the prison in which he had so long languished, and gave him all the honour due to his rank. His motives in so doing can only be guessed; tradition has it that he had fallen into disgrace with his father, and had been flung into a dungeon along with the Jewish monarch. He may have scented external hostility, and have wished to gain the friendship of the Jews, who, though not formidable in themselves, might be dangerous as allies of a foreign foe. Whatever his plans, he did not live to carry them out. He fell in

a palace-conspiracy; and after a short interval another dynasty ruled in Babylon. The last act of the drama had opened.

The exact policy of the new king, Nabu-nahid, is hard to determine. He is accused, in the priestly narratives written after his fall, of bringing foreign worships into the city. Despite these charges, however, it seems by no means improbable that he endeavoured to conciliate his priestly enemies; and he may, like our own Henry IV., have tried to do so by the persecution of the one religion which all nations detested. We may perhaps assign to this period those psalms of the Exile which breathe a specially pathetic longing for Zion along with a specially bitter hatred of the oppressor—psalms which are still sung, with a total unconsciousness of their meaning, by followers of Him who bids us love our enemies.

But the Jews had now not long to wait. Ere Nabu-nahid had reigned half a dozen years, there sprang from the almost unknown kingdom of Anshan one of those great conquerors whose work has permanently affected the history of the world. Cyrus gained over Persia, vanquished Media, and in 538, with the aid of the party in Babylon opposed to Nabu-nahid, became master of the city without

striking a blow. He came, he proclaimed, not as a conqueror but as a deliverer; and a main part of his policy was the restoration to their homes of the gods whom Nabu-nahid had brought to Babylon. This meant the return of Yahweh to Jerusalem.

Comparatively few availed themselves of the opportunity. It is probable that the vast majority of those who had been transported, by Shalmaneser and others, from the Northern Kingdom to Assyria, had long since become one with their neighbours; few would show the constancy ascribed to a Tobit or a Daniel; while even of the more recent arrivals many must have followed the example of conformity. Others again, though still devoted adherents of Yahweh, found it impossible or inconvenient to migrate; they remained and formed the nucleus of those Oriental colonies of Jews, whose influence in later times was so considerable. At Pentecost, it will be remembered, there were among the pilgrims "Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Pontus, and in Asia".

Forty-two thousand, however, it is said, followed Zerub-babel to Judea. These did not seek out their ancient abodes, but settled in or near Jerusalem; for the first object of the returned emigrants was not

so much to re-establish the nation as to restore the old worship, and secure the permanence of the single and central shrine on Mount Zion. We can picture their feelings as they gazed upon the ruin; hard must it have been to believe the words of the encouraging prophets, who, like Haggai a few years afterwards, assured them that the latter glory of the house should be greater than the former.

CHAPTER XIII

The Restoration

The Return was not accomplished at a single effort. It appears to be still proceeding when Zechariah and Haggai are prophesying, in the early part of the reign of Darius, nearly twenty years after the capture of Babylon by Cyrus. Nor was it possible even to begin the restoration of the Temple till that time; and only in 516 was the work completed. The promised Messiah did not appear; the colonists were miserably poor, and there were innumerable hindrances to be surmounted, both internal and external.

The chief difficulty lay in the acquired exclusiveness of the colonists themselves. During their exile they had learnt to look upon themselves alone as the true Jews. Those who had been left behind, though far more numerous than themselves, having intermarried with the neighbouring tribes, had in their view forfeited the inheritance of Yahweh. At first we find the Samaritans and Palestine Jews ex-

tending a welcome to the returned exiles, and offering to assist them in their work of restoration. But they were rudely repulsed, as if they were half-breeds or heathen demanding the privileges of the elect. From that day forward, as was inevitable, there began a division in the Jewish church; the old were cut off from the new, and the Samaritans, feeling themselves not wanted, gradually broke off dealings with Jerusalem. What made matters worse was that, in consequence of the natural Persian jealousy of secular rule, the practical kingship of Judea fell more and more into the hands of the High Priest, who was certain to emphasize the superiority, first of his caste, and then of his "nation". The utmost care was taken to exclude from true participation in the national rights all who could not claim descent from those who had been in Babylon; and even in the priestly class itself the Levites were gradually degraded into mere servants of the Temple. All rebellion was ruthlessly crushed. Those who made "strange marriages" were cast out; and the Levite "sons of Korah", who claimed that the "sons of Aaron" were taking too much on them, were vigorously repressed and put in their proper place. So at least we gather from a story told by the priestly writer, who represents

Korah, a rebel against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, as suffering a fearful punishment.

All this would probably have meant the total ruin of the colonists, if, in the year 458, a new accession had not come from Babylon, under a sort of Calvin, Ezra the scribe, who came with the resolve to exclude utterly from the Church the "Sons of the Land", to confine the religious privileges to the "Sons of the Exile" (Bĕnê Haggôlah), and to introduce and enforce the observance of the new Priestly Code which, as we have seen, had been growing into shape in Babylonia. For this purpose, he was armed with a rescript from Artaxerxes the Great King.

There were in Ezra, with all his bigotry and narrowness, the force, the perseverance, and the caution of a great revolutionary leader. He did not hurry over his work; at first, indeed, he held the new Code in the background, and professed to be acting solely in accordance with the precepts of the Deuteronomists. It was not till fourteen years had passed that he ventured openly to reveal his great design; nor, even then, did he undertake it till assured of the support of the new Governor [1]—

[1] I am by no means sure that Nehemiah did not *precede* Ezra; but I retain the traditional dating.

Nehemiah the son of Hacchelejah, a Jew high in favour with Artaxerxes, who had at his back the whole force of the Persian empire. Then, probably in 444, on "the first of Tisri", the new Law was read to the people, and a little later the purged nation was bound by a Solemn League and Covenant to keep it. This is the Code which, after centuries, the New Testament writers assert that "neither their fathers nor they were able to bear"; it consists almost exclusively of laws dealing with ceremonial observance or else with laws regulating the payment by the laity of dues to the Church; and aims at the supremacy of the priesthood in every detail of life. The majority of men simply will not endure such a *régime;* but it has one important and permanent effect—it ensures the vitality, amid almost any vicissitudes, of the small community which adopts it. It is to the legislation of Ezra that we owe the existence of the Jewish nation at the present day. It must be remembered, also, that the oppressive yoke did not burden the Jews outside the Holy Land; and these were by far the more numerous portion of the people. But it marked the final and irrevocable schism in the Church. A Jewish priest, Manasseh, having been expelled by Nehemiah for refusing to put aside his "strange wife",

the daughter of Sanballat the Samaritan prince, passed over to Samaria. Here Sanballat built for him the temple on "this mountain"—Gerizim near Shechem—which symbolized the total severance of the old local religion from the new. The Samaritans, receiving a revised Pentateuch from Manasseh, rejected the Prophets and the "Kethubim", in fact the whole remainder of our Old Testament. The first Jew to endeavour to bridge the chasm arose four hundred years later, and was greeted by his countrymen as a Samaritan and a demoniac, the friend of outcasts and sinners.

For the rest of the Persian period our information is but scanty; the history, indeed, is little more than a list of the names of the High Priests, who were, to all intents and purposes, the kings of the country. They were, of course, subject to the caprices of Persian satraps, who certainly did not always act with prudence or mildness. We are told, for example, that in the reign of Artaxerxes II. (about 375), the satrap Bagoses, to avenge a horrible murder committed by the High Priest John, sacrilegiously entered the Temple, and polluted it, with the sarcastic words, "Am not I purer than he who was slain in this place?" But in the time of Artaxerxes the Persian empire was already totter-

ing to its fall; the Ten Thousand Greeks had already revealed its rottenness, and ere long the steps of the irresistible conqueror were to be heard.

Much had been gained by the Jewish religion through its contact with Persia. Among these "gains", if "additions" be not the better word, may be reckoned in particular a vast development in the conception of angels and spirits. It is from this period that we date the birth of those Raphaels, Michaels, and Gabriels who fill so large a space in later story. But more important than any of these, perhaps, is the idea of Satan, who owes, if not his existence, yet many of his characteristics, to the Ahriman of Zoroastrianism. Appearing, for the first time in Jewish literature, during the Exile as one of the chief actors in the drama of Job, and a little later in a vision of Zechariah, Satan is at first viewed not as an enemy of God, but as one of his inspectors, sent to and fro in the earth to test the loyalty of Yahweh's servants. Later, we find him as a rebel, who has actually detached the air from the dominion of his overlord, and who has obtained complete authority over the demons, spirits, and phantasms of the world—so much so that he is able to mimic the wonders of Yahweh himself, and to deceive the very elect. He is a convenient scapegoat

for the errors of Providence. Whereas, in the days of Deuteronomy, it was Yahweh that stirred up David to his sin of numbering the people, the Chronicler, writing about the end of the Persian dominion, ascribed the crime to Satan. There can be no doubt that the invention of such a personage provides an apparent solution of many difficulties; and hence we are not surprised to find a very rapid growth in the Satanic sphere of influence.

Later yet, also through the annexation of Persian ideas, we meet with the conception of the guardian angels of kingdoms and of the *fravashi* or genius of an individual man. Thus, on the one hand, to the author of Daniel Michael was the angel-prince of the Holy People, and less distinguished angels had charge of Persia and Syria; on the other hand in the belief of our Lord's time the "angels" of little children had special rights of access to the throne of God, and, when Peter was imprisoned, his *fravashi* was supposed to have the power of moving freely from place to place.

Such was the origin, in part, of the immense paraphernalia of angelic and demonic beings with which later life and art were encumbered. As still further elements from outside were absorbed, the demons took on the horns and cloven feet of Pans

and satyrs, while the angels adopted a pair of wings the mechanical advantage of which is a minus quantity.

It may also have been to Persian influence that Judaism owed the first conception of the great doctrine of the Resurrection, of which there is no trace before the Exile, and to which even in Job, the Second Isaiah, and Ezekiel we cannot find the slightest allusion. Whether it first arose at this period or not, it grew steadily, if slowly, until, about a century and half before Christ, it appears fully-formed in the book of "Daniel", and a little later is the fixed and characteristic mark of Pharisaic dogma.

CHAPTER XIV

The Greek Domination

The immense impression made by Alexander on the Jewish mind may be seen in the speed and force of the images used to describe him by the author of Daniel a century and a half after his death, or in the pages of Josephus, written later still by two centuries. But, indeed, it is to be felt everywhere; and it was inevitable that it should be felt. In 334 he won his first victory in Asia; the next year, by the battle of Issus, he wrenched the western half of the empire from the hands of Darius; a year later, after a siege of frightful stubbornness on both sides, he captured Tyre, the island-stronghold from which Nebuchadnezzar himself had retired baffled; and shortly afterwards, by the conquest of Gaza, he opened to himself the doorway of Egypt. Legend says that at this moment he visited Jerusalem; that the high-priest Jaddua met him with the symbols, and even with the name, of Yahweh; and that the Great King, prostrating himself to the earth, owned

the supremacy of the One God. Whether this is true or not, there can be no doubt that the Jews saw in Alexander what their ancestors had seen in Cyrus, and that the king's policy was to cultivate their friendship.

But within nine years the "great horn" was broken; Alexander died, and left no successor. A score of pretenders struggled for his vast inheritance, and a confused series of wars began, which ended, or paused, in the seizure of Palestine by Ptolemy of Egypt. For a hundred years the country remained unde Egyptian suzerainty; the internal rule being carried on as before by the sacred dynasty of High Priests: Onias I., son of Jaddua, Simon I., Eleazar, Manasseh, Onias II., Simon II. The overlordship of the Ptolemies was on the whole mild and just, and the king-priests were able administrators. Simon II., if we may believe Ecclesiasticus, was "as a morning star in the midst of a cloud, as the moon at the full, as a young cedar of Lebanon, compassed by stems of palm-trees". We learn that he repaired the Temple, restored the cistern of waters, fortified the city against marauders, and took thought for his people lest they should fall. Never, perhaps, had the chosen nation enjoyed more peace and prosperity than at this time.

Meanwhile, the extension of Judaism all over the Eastern world, which, as we have seen, had begun already, proceeded ever more rapidly under the patronage of the kings. In Babylon, it was encouraged by Seleucus, and the Jews spread north to the shores of the Black Sea. A huge colony was to be found in the new city of Alexandria; and here, under Ptolemy Philadelphus, work was begun of incomparable importance. The Pentateuch was translated into Greek, and Jewish ideas were thus introduced to the external world—some return being in this way made for the benefits conferred on Judaism by contact with Grecian culture. During later centuries additions, less truthful and accurate, were made to the version. Its prestige was such as almost to eclipse that of the Hebrew original itself; tradition, as usual, brought in miracle to account for its repute, and its repute in turn aided the belief in the miracle; until at last we find the New Testament writers practically ignoring the original, and quoting instead that of the Seventy. Even in Judea itself the Septuagint was used, not of course in the public services but in the home; for Hebrew was now fast dying out as a spoken language, and Aramaic taking its place, while it was more and more necessary that the Jew who wished

to talk to his neighbours should understand Greek.

But the days of comparative quiet were soon to pass. Ptolemy Philadelphus, the friend of the Jews, died in 247; his son Euergetes engaged in wars with Antiochus II. of Syria, which, though carried on at a distance from Jerusalem, must have somewhat affected its prosperity; Ptolemy Philopator, after winning a great victory over Antiochus III. at Raphia in 217 came to the Holy City and demanded entrance into the sanctuary. The refusal of the High Priest, Onias II., to admit him is said to have filled his mind with hatred against the whole race, insomuch that he subjected not only the Jews of Jerusalem, but also those of Alexandria, to a severe persecution.

It is, however, with the accession of Antiochus IV. of Syria, in 175, that the real troubles of Judea began. This remarkable man succeeded in driving Egypt entirely out of the country, and would have subjected the land of the Nile itself but for the interposition of Rome. Foiled in this ambitious design, he turned his attention to the "Beautous Land". His character was very peculiar—indeed so much so, that not only his contemporaries but historians have explained it by assuming a touch of madness. He was unquestionably able, kingly in his

magnificence and generosity, a royal builder in his chief city of Antioch, and extraordinarily skilful in forming and concealing his designs. But he was at times entirely undignified; he loved, like Philip II. or Haroun Alraschid, to put off his robes of state and wander alone through the streets, but unlike them he took no pains to conceal his vagaries. All these characteristics are noted by the Jewish writer who has given us the book of Daniel, and who in that book describes Antiochus' "unyielding countenance" and skill in "dark sentences" or dissimulation. But not only was he Greek by descent and nature; he had spent fourteen years as a hostage in Rome, and had acquired an Occidental turn of mind which led him to seek the complete Hellenization of his dominions. He was not, of course, without allies among the Jews themselves. A large party favoured what must have appeared to very many the side of civilization and progress, and these may well have seemed to the king more numerous and powerful than they really were. By the orthodox Jews they were, inevitably, regarded as "transgressors of the Law, who made a covenant with the Gentiles, and sold themselves to do evil". To Antiochus they must have seemed like those Romans he had known in Italy, pioneers of the new Greek cul-

ture which was so speedily to make a conquest of its conquerors. He was blind to the dangers of his policy, and made haste to carry out his design of unifying the religion of his whole realm. He was perhaps not the first, and he was certainly not the last, to break himself to pieces on the rock-like obstinacy of Jewish monotheism. He thought that a few bribes and a few punishments would finish the work; he died before he had found out the real magnitude of his error.

What happened is known to every reader of Daniel and that excellent piece of plain history, the First Book of Maccabees: nor is there need to relate it here in full. The "evil root" began its work by threatening the punishment of death to all worshippers of the Name; the Temple was to be made a shrine of the Olympian Zeus; and altars to various heathen deities were to be erected not only in Jerusalem but all over the land. To these deities all were to be compelled to sacrifice; and unclean meats were to be forced down the throats of the true believers. On the 15th of Chisleu, 168 B. C., an idol, known to all the world by the name of "Abomination of Desolation", was actually set up on the very altar of burnt-offering; the books of the Law were sought out and burnt; and the recalcitrant were

put to death. Many conformed, but there were many martyrdoms; and the horror caused by the persecution was never forgotten.

At last the feeling broke out into open rebellion. Led by Mattathias, a priest of Modin (a small town twenty miles from Jerusalem), and head of a family known as Hasmoneans, the faithful banded themselves together. Calling themselves the Hāsīdīm or godly, they gathered adherents every day: nor did they lack Tyrtaeuses to cheer them on with song. Many psalms of this period remain, witnessing to the bitterness of the anguish and the determination of the sufferers to dare all rather than submit.

Mattathias died within a year, but a double portion of his spirit descended to his son Judas, who soon, passing from the defensive to the offensive, attacked and defeated army after army that was sent against him. This series of astonishing victories enabled him to restore and purify the sanctuary, three years after its desecration. Shortly afterwards, Antiochus died suddenly in the far East; his general Lysias made a treaty in which the religious liberties of the Jews were guaranteed.

It was during this troubled period that the extraordinary book of Daniel made its appearance—a

work of amazing influence not only in its own time but for a score of centuries afterwards. Written to console the suffering saints, it begins with a series of more or less allegorical fables, in which the triumphs of earlier Jewish confessors, symbols of the persecuted faith, were narrated. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, cast into the burning fiery furnace by Nebuchadnezzar and coming out unhurt, betokened the nation under the oppressions of Antiochus, and prophesied deliverance. Daniel, saved from the den of lions, is a second consoling prophecy. From these narratives the writer turns to a series of apocalypses, which teach the same lesson to his afflicted countrymen. He is one of the very few men who have been more accurate in foretelling the future than in describing the past. His "history" is everywhere erroneous; his anticipation of a cleansing of the temple and of the victories of Judas Maccabeus proved correct. But his chief importance in the story of Hebrew thought lies in this, that he is the first to speak clearly of a resurrection, and the first to speak at all of the future punishment of the wicked; doctrines destined to become the badges of the "Pharisaic" party to which he belonged, and finally borrowed by Christianity from that party. No Old Testament

work, indeed, has borne a greater part in the formation of Christian doctrine than this ultra-Jewish pamphlet; and that too though it does not contain a single real reference to the Messianic hope.

The war for freedom was over, but the war for absolute independence now began. The Hasmoneans had gradually changed from humble patriots fighting against the foreigner into ambitious aspirants for the kingship. The line of Joshua and Jaddua had proved but weak defenders of the faith: the Maccabees determined to supplant them. The story is long and varied of the steps by which they attained their end. Judas fell at Elasa, and was succeeded by his brother Jonathan; in his time the last high priest of the old family, Eliakim—whose use of the Greek name Alcimus shows his Hellenizing tendencies—died, and the Syrian king did not appoint his successor. But seven years later, Alexander Balas, in return for the assistance of Jonathan in his attempt on the Syrian throne, made him "Prince of Judah, High Priest of the nation, and Friend of the King". This was in 152. Shortly afterwards, yet another Syrian ruler captured Jonathan, imprisoned him, and finally put him to death; but Simon, the last son of Mattathias, proved perhaps the ablest of the family. Not only did he secure the independ-

ence of the country, but he succeeded in giving it peace and prosperity. Under him, trade, agriculture, and even foreign commerce flourished as they had not done since the idealized times of Solomon. No wonder the grateful people chose Simon hereditary ethnarch and High Priest "for ever". To him an unknown poet dedicated a psalm which, by a strange destiny, has been the subject of more controversy than any other. Like court-poets in general, he had to seek out a plausible genealogy for his patron. The old stock of Aaron and Zadok having vanished, he discovers a yet older ancestor for Simon, whom he celebrates alike as warrior, as prince, and as priest.

The Oracle of Yahweh to My Lord

Sit thou at my right hand,
Until I make thy foes thy footstool,
Yahweh shall stretch forth thy strong rod out of Zion;
Rule thou in the midst of thy foes.
Yahweh hath sworn, and will not alter:
Thou art priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek.

In Simon, then, the poet saw the promised Messiah; and, though he marked the actual Messiah of his panegyric by an acrostic in which the name Simon appears, it is small wonder that later genera-

tions, looking for a later deliverer, should have interpreted the prophecy not of the Maccabee but of another Saviour. But the rule of Simon, disguise it as he might, was less a priestly than a temporal sovereignty; and the Hasīdīm drew apart from the dynasty he had established. Their ideal had been freedom of worship, and by no means the re-establishment of the kingship which Samuel had cursed.

Nevertheless, Simon passed on the double rule to his son John Hyrcanus, who, after many vicissitudes, enlarged the realm by subduing Samaria and Idumea, and died in glory after a reign of thirty years. Under his successor, all pretence was laid aside, and the actual title of king was added to the reality. It was not unnatural that this should provoke resentment. A High Priest who spent nearly all his life in the field was felt to be an improper person to perform the sacrifices; and a revolt broke out. For a time Jannaeus had to wander as a fugitive in the desert; but the prestige of the Hasmonean family was still great, and he was able to return. A bloody proscription of the Hasīdīm, whom we may now call by the famous name of the Pharisees, followed his restoration; the sect was expelled from

Judea, and Jannaeus, supported by his Sadducees, reigned unopposed till his death in 79.

Jannaeus was succeeded by his widow Salome, who, by assuming only the queenship herself, and handing over the priesthood to her son Hyrcanus, secured peace between the opposing parties. Her advisers sat at a council-board known as the Synedrion—or, to use the more familiar Hebrew term—the Sanhedrim. Into this council, it would seem, she introduced scribes—or perhaps merely increased their number—and thus strengthened the dual element in the ruling body. Though this caused some discontent among the Sadducees or secular party, yet the truce was fairly maintained so long as Salome lived. As soon as she died, however, the strife once more broke out; the Sadducees, led by Aristobulus, second son of Jannaeus, rebelled, and succeeded in deposing Hyrcanus from the priesthood. Hyrcanus was thus driven to rely more than ever upon the support of his Idumean general Antipater. In the succeeding struggle the chances varied from side to side, until the appearance in Syria of the great Roman general Pompey gave a decisive turn to fortune. Pompey, after hearing both sides, and after hesitating some time, at length declared for

Hyrcanus. Jerusalem, though obstinately defended by the Sadducees, was taken by storm; and Pompey, after penetrating into the Holy of Holies, restored the priestship to Hyrcanus, abolished the kingship, diminished the size of the realm, and placed a Roman garrison in the city. By adopting the cause of the Pharisees he was really, though he did not know it, building a ladder to the throne for Antipater and his son Herod; but it was to be a throne entirely dependent on whatever general should secure the power in Rome itself.

Meanwhile, during all these confused political changes, a steady and continuous change had been taking place in the character of Jewish literature. To the canon of the Old Testament had been added the historical books, the three Major Prophets, and at least some of the Twelve Minor Prophets. The patriotic struggle against Antiochus Epiphanes had produced a stream of poetry of which the Book of Psalms preserves some vigorous specimens; and the victories of the Hasmoneans inspired a writer under John Hyrcanus to compose the First Book of Maccabees. But we now find, for the first time, an impulse towards the composition of romances, all "with a purpose." Of such are the book of Judith, written with the aim of encouraging the Jews in

their warfare against Syria; Tobit, to inculcate the full observance of the law; and Esther, to aid in the recognition of the Feast of Purim. To this class belongs the first half of the Book of Daniel. At the same time, the Pharisaic party was not behindhand in the production of psalms and poems glorifying the Law: these, as is inevitable, are more meritorious in their intent than in their accomplishment; the longest and most characteristic sample of them is the huge acrostic now numbered 119 in our collection of Psalms. Alongside of these are the gnomic works of Ben Sira, and a whole series of pseudonymous philosophical writings, in which the problems of life are handled with remarkable freedom. Of these the most famous are the sceptical "Koheleth" or Ecclesiastes, and the indignant orthodox reply to it, the Book of Wisdom. Both of these pamphlets assumed the name of Solomon; and it is one of the ironies of literary history that, while the heretical work obtained admission to the canon of the church, the orthodox reply failed to escape from the Apocrypha.

But by far the most characteristic and important *genre* of literature in this period is the Apocalyptic: a class of books which, though for a long time far too much neglected by Biblical students, exerted

an immense influence upon the early Christian writers, and through them upon our own Western world; we can indeed trace that influence through the whole of the Middle Ages till they culminate in Dante, and through the modern era till the times of Swedenborg and Blake.

We have seen the gradual decline of prophecy of the old kind. A few prophets indeed lingered on, as survivals of a dead world, into Hasmonean times: nay, Josephus calls John Hyrcanus himself a prophet. The last six chapters of Zechariah, and perhaps parts of Joel, with interpolations elsewhere, are specimens of their work; and the vitality of the order is shown by its revival in early Christianity; but the best writers no longer chose the prophetic method of teaching. They prepared the style adopted, in much of his work, by Ezekiel, and made popular by the vast prestige of the book ascribed to Daniel. And yet, as professor Charles has well pointed out, the aims of prophecy and of apocalyptic are essentially the same—both have in view a moral reformation, and both use fundamentally the same methods.

Prophecy had used the method of visions and trances; apocalyptic used the same. Prophecy had

pointed forward to a glorious future: apocalyptic also anticipated the victory of the chosen people, but with this difference, that whereas the prophets placed their triumphs in this world, the apocalyptic seers placed it "at the end of the days"—that is, in a new heaven and a new earth. This great change in spiritual attitude took place about the time of John Hyrcanus; and it is this form of Judaism which is the true precursor of Christianity. Prophecy gives us the germs of the theory that the world, as we know it, will perish in a great catastrophe: apocalyptic develops this idea into a clear and distinct dogma; and here again the Christian writers borrowed the conception not from the prophets but from the seers. Above all, where prophecy had appeared to fail, apocalyptic reinterpreted it in such a way as to show that the fulfilment was to take place in the future. A dozen examples might be given; it will suffice here to refer to the curious chapter of Daniel, in which we are told that the seer, meditating on the "seventy years" of Jeremiah, was led to view these years as "weeks of years" (i. e. 490), and thence to fix the destruction of the power of Antiochus at a point three and a half years from his own time. Later, the

seventy weeks of Daniel were themselves subjected to a similar scrutiny, and reinterpreted in accordance with the needs of another time.

Of the mass of literature of this kind which must have appeared in the period we have just passed through, a very considerable selection has been preserved to us. The Book of Noah, now partially included in Enoch, may be dated about 250 B. C. The immensely important Book of Enoch itself is of varying dates and styles: one portion is slightly anterior to Daniel, another almost exactly contemporary, a third, considerably later, is a curious astronomical treatise. It is this work, as is well known, which is quoted by Jude in his epistle; but that one reference is far from fully indicating the great influence of "Enoch" on Christian thought. The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs were written by a Pharisee who was also an admirer of John Hyrcanus; this fixes the date at about 106 B. C. Contemporary with it is the Book of Jubilees —a monument of extreme legal formalism, which shows the extent to which the Torah had secured the devotion of the Pharisaic party a hundred years before Christ. The Psalms of Solomon are by various hands; the last two, written perhaps about 40 B. C., are strongly Messianic in tone.

This brief enumeration is enough to show what a gross error it is to fancy that Jewish literature ends with Malachi. Without some knowledge of the works written *after* Malachi, the rise of Christianity becomes absolutely unintelligible.

CHAPTER XV

The Roman Period

From the moment of the capture of Jerusalem by Pompey Judea never ceases to feel the influence of Rome. The restoration of the priesthood to Hyrcanus, and the consequent increase in the power of Antipater as his Mayor of the Palace, meant the transformation of the Sadducees into a patriotic anti-Roman party; and Antipater was able to maintain himself only by currying favour with whatever great Roman chief gained the temporary mastery in the civil wars that fill the history of the Republic during its last fifty years. In 48 B. C. Caesar defeated Pompey: Antipater therefore went over to the victor. After the death of Caesar in 44 he supported Cassius. Next year he died, but the tale of tergiversation is kept up by his son Herod, who after the defeat of Cassius at Philippi paid court to Antony. His reward was the title of King, and the assistance of a Roman army in reconquering Jerusalem. When Antony in turn fell before Augus-

tus, he changed once more, and was confirmed in his kingdom—nay, his dominions were enlarged until the empire of David seemed revived in the person of a half-heathen Edomite.

Had the throne of Herod been secure, and had he not been exposed to the fierce intrigues which seem inseparable from the life of Oriental courts, he would probably, notwithstanding the equivocal means by which he had risen, have left the name of a benevolent and enlightened monarch. But the party of the Sadducees was openly hostile, and there were many of the Hasmonean family (to say nothing of the aged Hyrcanus) to dispute his title. For safety, then, he had to begin his reign with murder, and to carry it on with more murders. Forty-five Sadducee members of the Sanhedrim were his first victims; every single descendant of the Maccabees was slaughtered sooner or later, as opportunity or excuse occurred. The story of the death of his beloved wife Mariamne, the most illustrious child of the Maccabee clan, is known to all: she fell to the machinations of Herod's sister, and to his own cruel suspicions.

But all these murders, fearful as they are, must not blind us to the great qualities of the ruler. Though Augustus, hearing of the death of Herod's

children, remarked with a Greek pun that he would rather be Herod's swine than his son, yet the murders of Herod were fewer than those by which Augustus himself had cleared the path to power; and we do not think of Augustus as a mere assassin. If we compare Herod with so great a king as Mithridates, or with so renowned an emperor as Aurungzebe, he will not suffer by the comparison.

He was, at any rate, religiously tolerant, and permitted both Pharisees and Essenes, nay even Sadducees and heathen, to worship as they pleased. He patronized alike Hillel the leader of one sect of Rabbins and Shammai the leader of another. As a builder he outshone the fame of Solomon himself: two Caesareas, Antipatris, Cypros, Agrippeum, are among the cities he founded. But most of all does he owe his fame to his restoration, or rather entire rebuilding, of the Temple; which, when finally completed, was one of the wonders of the world, so much so that the proverb was, "He who has not seen the Temple has not seen beauty." But despite all these services to Judaism, he never reconciled the Jews to himself. He had two unforgiveable faults—he was an Idumean, and he was after all a living proof of Roman domination.

He died in B. C. 4; and the Roman domination

became still more marked. The Emperor refused to continue his kingdom in its integrity, and divided it among Herod's sons, of whom Philip alone showed ability and moderation. Archelaus, to whom Judea was allotted, had the tyrannical nature of his father without his intellectual power. At length, goaded beyond bearing, his subjects appealed to Rome, Archelaus was banished, and a procurator was appointed to rule the land under the Proconsul of Syria. Of Antipas, to whom Galilee was allotted, the New Testament gives a sufficiently accurate character; his murder of John the Baptist is typical of his weakness, and the name of "fox" given him by our Lord expresses his craft.

Meanwhile, things were slowly running their inevitable course toward the fatal end. The Roman provincial government under the Empire was as a rule just and fairly humane; nor would the provincials have willingly changed it for that of their former rulers. But in Palestine things were different. The Jews were something new in Roman experience; as the Romans themselves welcomed any number of new gods to Rome, so they had found other nations quite willing to recognize the Roman Pantheon. To find a nation obstinately bent not only on cleaving to their own God but on keeping

out others, was a surprise and an embarrassment. It would have taken all the tact of the best rulers to maintain the peace in such circumstances. But the rulers of Syria were, so far as we can judge, by no means the best that Rome could have sent; and the procurators were worse. Gessius Florus seemed to delight in irritating his subjects. Pontius Pilate, a weakling, showed the violence of weakness.

An interval was allowed by fate in which Herod Agrippa was given all the dominions of the great Herod; but his reign was short, and Judea fell under procurators once more. Of these, Felix, though married to a Jewess, was perhaps the worst; his successor Festus, able and enlightened as he was, found it impossible to undo the evil Felix had wrought. At length, late in the reign of Nero, the land broke out into open insurrection. We need not repeat here the terrible story. Nero sent his best general, Vespasian, to crush the rising. It took all the ability, even of Vespasian, to subdue Galilee alone; and then the fall of Nero, with the subsequent anarchy, gave the Jews two years of respite. At the end of the two years Vespasian found himself Emperor; and his son Titus took up the unfinished work. Jerusalem was at length reduced by famine; even then the rebellion lingered for a year.

Finally, when the war was at last over, the existence of the Jews as a nation with a settled abode was brought to an end. Thousands were massacred; thousands were scattered to the ends of the earth. Fifty years later another desperate rebellion added ruin to ruin under Bar-Cochba and the Rabbi Akiba the remnant rose against Hadrian. No heroism, no fanaticism availed. The heathen again came into the inheritance of Yahweh; and the very name of Jerusalem was for a while lost in that of Aelia Capitolina.

CHAPTER XVI

Conclusion

If history be, as some have called it, philosophy teaching by example, then a history crowded with miracle, and full of narratives of special interventions of Providence, is the least useful of histories. It may have its interest to the student of human ideas, but to the man who is seeking guidance in the practical affairs of life it is positively harmful. To a navigator the roughest chart of the Mediterranean is more serviceable than all the wonderful tales of the Odyssey; and the man travelling through a country infested with wild animals will do better to provide himself with a rifle than to read the stories of saints like St. Sergius or St. Francis, at the sight of whom bears and lions grew tame.

So with the history of the Jews. If it is a history of constant direct interferences with the ordinary course of nature, it is of little or no utility to the modern Englishman, to whom such things do not happen. But if we find that, with the Jew as with

the Englishman, the *natural* effect follows the cause according to a regular order, then the Bible history assumes a significance and gains a value proportionate to the remarkable character of the nation described. In the case of Greece or Rome we can, with more or less completeness, trace the causes of success or failure. We know roughly why Athens rose and why she fell; why Greece was able to resist Persia but could not resist Philip of Macedon; why Rome thrust back Hannibal but succumbed to Alaric. And, unless we discover the *natural* reason why the Israelite people resisted Philistia but fell to Nebuchadnezzar, and why, though scattered by Titus, it still lives in conscious unity though dispersed, we may have been reading an interesting tale, but we certainly have not been reading history.

From very early times, as we have seen, the Jews themselves, struck by the constant ups and downs of the national fortune, set to work to discover the solution of the problem; and, as was inevitable with early investigators of so difficult a question, reached a succession of answers based on inadequate inductions. The Deuteronomist, for example, saw the cause in the degree of singleness with which the nation devoted itself to Yahweh. Yahweh, he said,

was a jealous God, who would bear no brother near the throne: if his people admitted another god to their hearts and homes, he deserted them and left them alone to face their enemies.

As with all theories invented to explain facts, this theory explained *some* of them. A country united in worship is so far united in feeling, and can present a united front to the foe. But when the theory was carried to an extreme, and when the heretic worshipper was ruthlessly crushed out, it became a source of weakness. As Louis XIV. missed at Blenheim the Protestants he had slaughtered or expelled from his country; as at Fontenoy the British were defeated by the Irish regiments their own tyranny had banished; so at Megiddo Josiah must have missed the support of those Baal-worshippers whom he had destroyed. On the other hand, the success of an Omri or a Jeroboam II. required much ingenuity before it could be squared with the Deuteronomist doctrine.

A truer conception was that of the great prophets, who saw in injustice and oppression the secret of failure. They too were right to a point. Nothing so surely ruins a country as social inequality and the grinding of the faces of the poor. It was a great step forward thus to recognize in Yahweh less a

"jealous" and exclusive than a moral deity; and a hundred examples could be given to show that the theory needed but a few corrections and amplifications to come very near the truth. We can see clearly that Assyria and Sparta, built up on war only and regardless of justice, fell by the very sword which they had invoked. And the social oppression of Solomon, leading directly to the disruption of the kingdom, was an example, never forgotten by the Jews, of the result of neglecting this truth.

But there was yet more to be considered. Neither unity of worship, nor a certain measure of social justice, will avail a small country, surrounded by more powerful enemies, if the foreign policy is unwise. This fact was seen by Jeremiah, and expressed by him with vigour in the peculiar language of the time. It was not the idolatry of Judah, nor the trust in oppression, nor becoming vain in robbery, that were the main causes of the fall of Jerusalem; but the inability to see that, of the two contending Great Powers, the Chaldean was both physically and morally by far the superior. The policy of Jeremiah, loyally followed out, would have saved Judah from its crowning disaster.

After the Return, we find the Deuteronomic

error revived and intensified. The great ruin had resulted in strengthening the view that the favour of Yahweh was to be found solely in a rigid observance of the Law. As a consequence, the nation suffered yet another disruption, and inevitably lost its political independence. Some overlordship, whether Persian, Greek, or Roman, was henceforth its certain destiny: a people with so narrow a creed was bound to be small and physically helpless; nay, a large party in the state actually *welcomed* this subjection. At the same time, this very narrowness and bigotry, while involving the constant shedding of weaker elements, meant the survival of the remainder amid misfortunes which would have destroyed, probably, any other organization that ever existed. As rocks resist the billows and the sky, so the Jewish church has resisted the countless buffetings of fate.

It is thus satisfactory to realise that, while there is much that is extraordinary in Jewish history, there is nothing miraculous about it; and the study of it, therefore, instead of being a mere exercise of curiosity, is a valuable and useful labour. The Jews were not, in an irrational or super-rational sense, the Chosen People; their circumstances produced their very remarkable character, their character

again reacted on their circumstances, and so on in the marvellous, but natural, fashion in which human destiny invariably works out its course. As one of the very greatest of the race observes, "If any one wishes to maintain that the Jews, from any cause, have been chosen by God for ever, I will not gainsay him if he will admit that this choice, whether temporary or eternal, has no regard, in so far as it is peculiar to the Jews, to aught but dominion and physical advantages (for by such alone can one nation be distinguished from another), whereas in regard to intellect and true virtue, every nation is on a par with the rest, and God has not in these respects chosen one people rather than another." [1]

All nations, in fact, are chosen by God for *some* purpose: the potter chooses one vessel for honour and another for dishonour. The Romans, according to Virgil, were chosen for empire, the Greeks for art, poetry, and eloquence. We "Anglo-Saxons" regard ourselves, and rightly, as chosen for yet another end. But the choice was made in the way in which God always chooses—by giving us a geographical position, a peculiar history, a rudimentary character which circumstances have

[1] Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-politicus*, ch. iii, *ad fin.*

moulded in accordance with natural laws. In the same way the Jews were "chosen" to do a certain work in the world; and there is no nation which has done a work more remarkable or more beneficial.

APPENDIX

I

Select Glossary, Including General Explanations

Abomination of Desolation. The name given by Daniel (IX 27 and elsewhere) to the altar and image set up in the Temple by Antiochus Epiphanes. The exact meaning is uncertain; perhaps "Abomination causing appalment," is the best translation. There seems to be a pun involved in the word "shoōmēm," *appalling.* Antiochus set up an altar to Jupiter (Zeus) of Heaven: the Hebrew for heaven is "shāmāyim"; the Jews altered this to shōmēm, and (p. 57) they altered Belzebub to Beelzebul.

Ambulando. Certain questions are very difficult to solve in theory, but present no difficulty in practice. Thus motion is hard to understand, but we move nevertheless. Such a question "solvitur ambulando," is easily solved by walking.

Angel—properly Messenger. The "Angel of the Lord" is the "Messenger of Yahweh," and seems to be the phrase used to denote Yahweh in human shape.

Anthropomorphism—the system by which God is represented as like man. Greek religion, e. g., is mainly "anthropomorphic."

Apocalyptic. A revelation of divine things, given usually to a seer in trance, by means of symbols and mysterious messages, is called an "apocalypse." The literature of these visions is called "apocalyptic." (cp. the "Book of Revelation"—Greek, *Apocalypse.*)

Arbia. In 1260 the Florentines were totally defeated by the Sienese on the river Arbia; their *carroccio,* or cart carrying the standard of their city, was captured, and the standard hung up in the cathedral of Siena. The impression made by this defeat may be gathered from Dante's *Inferno,* canto X.

Ashērah—a rude wooden pillar, or roughly-carved tree, representing some god. Wrongly translated "grove" in the Authorised Version.

Bábar—the great Mogul conqueror of Northern India; he died in 1530. His memoirs still survive, and are an amazing record of adventure, disaster, and final triumph.

Bāmoth—"high places": the natural choice for altars on which to sacrifice to the gods.

Benê Haggōlāh—"Sons of the Exile." The Hebrews used the word "Ben," son, to denote almost any kind of connection: thus Jesus calls Judas "the son of perdition"—i. e. the abandoned one. Thomson, in the *Land and the Book,* tells us he was called by the Arabs "father of a saucepan" because he wore a tall hat.

(Cp. *Zechariah* IV. 14, "sons of oil" for "anointed ones").

Beauteous Land—Daniel, XI, 16, 41: a patriotic name for Israel.

Beserkers—Northern Warriors, who in their "fits" did prodigious feats of strength, and were thought to be invulnerable.

Born in the purple. The sons of the Eastern Emperors were born in a chamber lined with porphyry (which in Greek is the same word as purple): the first prince to whom this phrase was applied was Constantine Porphyrogenitus (d. 959). The phrase is now used to denote those princes who are born while their fathers are kings—an unhappy fate. (cp. Gibbon, chap. 48).

Carroccio—see *Arbia.*

Cherethites—see *Pelethites.* Perhaps *Cretans.*

Chisten—month roughly corresponding to December.

Cid—Ruy Diaz, the Spanish *campeador* or champion in the wars with the Moors (d. 1099). Many legends and ballads grew up around his name. *Cid* is originally an Arab word, meaning lord or captain.

Colenso—the famous Bishop of Natal. He was led by conversations with the natives to consider the numbers of the Israelites as given in the Pentateuch, and, being a distinguished mathematician, soon saw they were impossible, and proceeded further to discuss the whole Mosaic question. The volumes he wrote on the subject caused a great scandal among the orthodox. He died in 1883.

Corvée—a French name for a compulsory labour-tax: e. g., when peasants are compelled to serve their lords in building or road-making. The Hebrew word is *māṣ*. Thus Issachar (p. 79) "became a thrall under the māṣ" to the earlier inhabitants of the land.

Cyropaedīa—A "life" of Cyrus by Xenophon, in which the writer is really giving a picture of the perfect King.

Dagon—the Philistine God. Formerly supposed to be a fish-god (*dag*, a fish: see Milton, *Paradise Lost*, I. 462): perhaps more probably a corn-god.

Deuteronomism—the theory of the author of Deuteronomy, that idolatry is punished by disaster in this world.

Empecinado—"Pitchy-face," the nickname of Diaz, one of the guerrilla-leaders of the Spaniards in the Peninsular War, 1808–1814. Of him many amazing stories are told.

Ephod—originally an image of Yahweh, often consulted for oracles. The "linen ephod" of the priests was a kind of girdle, possibly once marked with a picture of Yahweh.

Ethnarch—a petty ruler. Thus Archelaus was made ethnarch of Judea by Augustus after the death of his father Herod the Great; and Aretas appointed an ethnarch over Damascus (II *Cor.* XI, 32).

Ex-post-facto—made after the event: a prophecy ex-post-facto is therefore no prophecy at all.

Galgăcus—the chief of the Scots at the battle of the Grampians between the Scots and the Romans. Taci-

tus ascribes to him a speech in which he accuses the Romans of "making a solitude and calling it peace."

Gerar—the district afterwards conquered by the Philistines. Abraham (i. e. Israel before the migration to Egypt) seems to have had amicable relations with Gerar.

Hafrsfirth—About 872 King Harald of Norway won a decisive battle over the nobles at this firth.

Hecatomb—properly the sacrifice of a hundred head of cattle: often used loosely for any great sacrifice.

Henotheism—see *Monolatry*.

Hexateuch—"The Six Volumes." After the "Pentateuch" (the "five Books of Moses") had been analysed, it was seen that "Joshua" exhibited precisely the same features, and could not be treated apart from the Five. Hence we now take the first six books of the Bible as one, called the "Hexateuch."

Holiness. Ten chapters of Leviticus, XVII–XXVI, which are *like* P, but of independent origin, treat specially of ceremonial and moral purity, and are known as the "Law of Holiness." They have strong affinities with Ezekiel, and are often quoted, in that prophecy. The symbol H is generally used to denote them.

Iconoclasm—image-breaking. The early Protestants broke down the Catholic "idols."

Jashar—The "Upright." A collection of old ballads and songs is often referred to, called the "Book of Jashar." In it, for example, was the song describing Joshua's

victory at Beth-horon, as well as David's dirge over Jonathan.

Jehad—see *Pogróm*.

Keening—the Irish word for piercing lamentation over the dead. Often applied to the Oriental professional mourning: e. g. that over the daughter of Jairus.

Kĕthūbīm—The "Writings." The Jews divided the Old Testament into the Law, the Prophets, and the Kethubim: the last word being represented in Greek by *Hagiographa* (Holy Writings).

Kīnāh—a dirge: usually marked by a special metre, a long line of five strong accents, broken after the third. Its character is visible even to English readers in *Lamentations* I, 1 or *Amos* V, 2.

Kossovo—"Blackbird-field," where, in 1389, the Servians were crushed by the Turks: a disaster celebrated in many ballads.

LXX—the Seventy, in Latin Septuaginta. The translation of the Old Testament into Greek is, by tradition, said to have been made by seventy scholars, and finished in seventy days. Hence it is called the "Septuagint."

Magni nominis umbra—"shadow of a great name": the phrase applied by the Latin poet Lucan to Pompey, who, when he came to fight Caesar, was no longer the man he had been.

Mās—see *corvée*.

Moabite Stone. In 1868 was discovered one of the most important of ancient monuments, the inscription of Mesha king of Moab describing his victories

(II *Kings*, III, 4). The following extracts will show its character:

"Omri king of Israel allied himself with the enemies of Moab; then Chemosh was angry with his land, and gave it up to the oppressors. In my days Chemosh said, I will look upon him and his house, and Israel shall perish . . . And Chemosh said to me, Take Nebo against Israel, and I went up in the night and took it . . . And the king of Israel built Jahaz, but Chemosh drove him before me, and I besieged Jahaz, and took it . . . I built Arocr, and made the streets in Armon, . . . I built the temple of Diblathaim, and the temple of Beth-Meon, and brought Chemosh thither. . . . And Chemosh said, Fight against Horonaim and take it."

Monolatry—or henotheism, the worship of a single god in a particular land. *Monotheism* is the belief in but one God for the whole universe.

Myrmidons—originally the followers of Achilles in Homer. Hence used by any vigorous fighters, as we say "the myrmidons of the Law" for the police.

Negeb—the district south of Judah. David made "roads" (raids) against the Negeb (I *Sam.*, XXVII, 10).

Nithing—The word applied by the Old English to a dastard. William Rufus proclaimed that any one who would not follow him against his enemies should be called a *nithing;* and a large army came to his help. In many respects this word seems the best representative of the Hebrew *nabal* "a fool." "He hath

wrought *folly* in Israel" might be rendered, "He has done a nithing's deed."

Paronomasia—or pun, a very frequent figure in Hebrew. Thus, in *Isa.*, XXIV, 17, and *Jer.*, XLVIII, 43, we have puns in *pachad*, *pachath*, and *pach*, fear, pit, snare.

Pelethites—David's body-guard of Pelethites and Cherethites: perhaps, Philistines and Cretans; the Philistines being of Cretan origin.

Pogróm—the name of the Russian crusades against the Jews, as *Jehad* is of a Mohammedan crusade against the "infidel."

Pre-prophetism—the system of the earlier prophets, as distinct from the later (beginning with Amos and Hosea) whose writings have come down to us.

Raleigh—given up by James I to pacify the Spaniards, whose ambassador, Gondomar, feared Raleigh's enmity.

River—often used specially of the Euphrates (*Psalm* LXXII, 8). This is *nahar*. Where the Hebrew is *yeōv*, it stands for the Nile.

Rōch—a seer: an earlier name for a *Nābi* or prophet (I *Sam.*, IX, 9).

Satan—An enemy; originally, as in Job, one of Yahweh's angels, sent out to inspect and report on evils in his realm.

Septuagint—see LXX.

Shĕōl—the dreary abode of the dead, good or bad: somewhat similar to the Hades of the Greeks. To be carefully distinguished from the later *Gehenna*, the place

of torment for the wicked. See *Job, passim,* and *Isa.,* XIV.

Shĕphēlah—the lowland on the south-west coast of Palestine, between the Levant and the mountains of Judah. Occupied by the Philistines; the natural route between Egypt and the Euphrates.

Talmud—The "Learning": the later Jewish literature devoted to enlarging and explaining the Scriptures. Strictly, it denotes the two series of commentaries called the *Mishna* and the *Gemara;* but it is often extended to cover almost all Jewish commentaries.

Targums—individual paraphrases of books of Scripture. Two famous Targums are those of Jonathan and Onkelos.

Tell-el-Amarna—In this place were discovered a number of clay-tablets of immense historical importance. They are the despatches of Amenophis and his son Khu-n-Aten to their governors in Syria, at a time when Palestine was under Egyptian overlordship; as well as the answers of the governors.

Teman—a place in Edom: often used in a wide sense to denote the South.

Ten Words—The Commandments. The earlier "Ten Words," as was seen by Goethe in 1773, are to be found in *Exodus* XXXIV: the later, those we still repeat, are in Ex. XX.

Tendency-writing—German *Tendenz-Schrift,* a work written less to tell the truth than to prove a theory.

Tetragrammaton—see *Yahweh.*

Tyrtacus—The Spartans, discouraged by defeat, are said

to have sent to Athens for help. The Athenians sent them a poet called Tyrtacus, whose strains inspired the Spartans to renew their efforts till they gained the victory.

Urim and Thummim—magical ornaments put in the wallet (so render the word translated *breastplate*) of the High Priest (*Exod.*, XXVIII, 30) which gave oracles. They refused to answer Saul (I *Sam.*, XXVIII, 6). Their mystical character is hinted at by the LXX translation, "manifestation and truth."

Yahweh—By a common superstition the Jews of later days forbade the pronunciation of this name, and substituted Adonai (Lord) or Elohim (God) for it, retaining only the four consonants YHWH (called in Greek the *Tetragammaton* or Four Letters). In the "painted" copies of the Bible these consonants were given the vowels of Adonai or Elohim; hence the erroneous pronunciation Jehovah. The true pronunciation, as well as the true derivation, can but be guessed; but it was probably pronounced *Yahee* or *Yahweh:* and there is reason to think it was connected with Hāyāh, to be. The old version, "I am," is therefore perhaps correct.

Yemen—the South. Properly the Right, the eye being directed toward the east. Cp. the Deccan in India (allied to Latin *dexter*).

II

Short Bibliography

The literature of this subject is enormous, and only the merest fraction of it can here be even mentioned. The first aim of the student should be to gain a sound knowledge of the Old Testament, and for this guidance is necessary: a slavish acquaintance with the text alone has been the source of great evil. Good elementary books are SKINNER, *Concerning the Bible* (Sampson, Low): BLAKISTON, *The Bible of To-Day* (Cambridge University Press), and the various works of PATERSON SMYTH (*The Bible in the Making, How we Got our Bible,* etc). Thence the reader might pass to two excellent works in the Home University Library, MOORE, *Literature of the Old Testament,* and *Charles, Between the Old and the New Testaments.* Both these works are by scholars of the highest distinction, and, brief as they are, are authoritative (Henry Holt and Co.)

Everyone should consult DRIVER'S *Literature of the Old Testament:* a truly great work, erring if at all on the side of caution, but always judicial.

For the actual books of the Bible, the *Century* series,

and the *Cambridge Bible for Schools* are usually admirable. Special mention may be made of PEAKE's *Job* and DRIVER's *Daniel* (in the latter the proof that the book cannot be earlier than the Greek period is a good example of sober "Higher Criticism" of the modern kind: and much history may be learned by the way). For more advanced students the *International Critical Commentary*—the work of the best Hebraists of England and America—is almost indispensable. Here the volumes are, with very few exceptions, so good that it is invidious to choose; but MOORE's *Judges*, HARPER's *Amos and Hosea* (containing a most admirable summary of the early religious history), and J. M. P. SMITH's *Nahum* (here again the historical introduction is excellent) may be taken *as specimens*. L. B. PATON's *Esther* contains a complete account of the book, and an irrefragable demonstration of its fabulous character and "tendencious" purpose. And these commentaries, though of course specially useful to those with some knowledge of Hebrew, will repay also the student whose knowledge is confined to his own tongue.

For the HISTORY OF CRITICISM: CHEYNE's *Founders of Old Testament Criticism* gives a semi-biographical account of the chief names, with an appreciation of the contribution of each to the subject. Cheyne's personal views must be received with caution: but his facts are sound.

For JEWISH HISTORY, PRESERVED SMITH: somewhat dull, but scholarly: MONTEFIORE.

JOSEPHUS is now in the *Everyman Series*.

STANLEY'S *Jewish Church* (largely based on EWALD) is, like MILMAN'S *History of the Jews* and Newman's HEBREW MONARCHY, now out of date; but the historical parables, and the pleasant style, make it still worth referring to.

G. ADAM SMITH'S *Historical Geography of the Holy Land* is a delightful work, still indispensable. STANLEY'S *Sinai and Palestine* has the same qualities as his *Jewish Church*: THOMSON'S *Land and the Book,* for minute knowledge and observation, can hardly be superseded.

Advanced students cannot dispense with reading WELLHAUSEN'S *Prolegomena,* the great work which finally established Graf's theory that "P," the "Priestly Code," is in the main post-exilic, and later than J, E, and D. In the same volume as the English version of this work is WELLHAUSEN'S brief *History of Israel.* Still more detailed is the *Onderzock* of the Dutch scholar KUENEN, which also has been translated.

For the MYTHOLOGY: FRAZER'S *Folk-lore in the O. T.,* best studied in the abridged one-volume edition: ROBERTSON SMITH, *Religion of the Semites,* a pioneer work of great importance: for those who can read German, BENZINGER, *Hebräische Archäologie.* For the nations with whom the Jews came into contact: SAYCE, *Hittites* (also WRIGHT): for Egypt and Assyria BREASTED (*Ancient History*) gives all that can be desired in the early stages.

At all stages the two great works of reference, HASTINGS'S *Bible Dictionary* and CHEYNE'S *Encyclopaedia Biblica* should be consulted: the latter, as might be ex-

pected, is more "free" than the former, and, in the opinion of the present writer, is often somewhat hasty and rash. The *Jewish Encyclopaedia* is a mine of information and GRAETZ's monumental *History of the Jews* contains a full account of the fortunes of the nation at all periods, but is of more interest to the Jews themselves than to Gentiles. The *Code of Hammurabi* is given in full with a brief discussion by JOHNS: extracts from it, and from many other inscriptions, will be found in PINCHES, *O. T. in the Light of the Records of Assyria and Babylonia.*

III

Chronological Tables

(Many of these dates—see p. 72 sq.—must be regarded as conjectural or approximate).

Hammurabi, perhaps contemporary with "Abraham"	circ.	2000 B. C.
Migration to Egypt	circ.	1500
The Exodus	circ.	1300–1250
Period of the Judges		1300–1100
David	circ.	1000
The Disruption	circ.	933
Battle of Karkar (Ahab)		854
Tiglath-pileser begins to reign: Jeroboam II dies: (Amos)		745
Fall of Samaria (Sargon)		722
Sennacherib		705
Invades Palestine (Isaiah)		701
Sennacherib dies. Esarhaddon		681
Asshur-bani-pal, son of Esarhaddon, captures Thebes in Egypt		661
Josiah begins to reign		639
Discovery of Deuteronomy (Nahum?)		621
Fall of Nineveh	circ.	610
Battle of Megiddo (Jeremiah)		608

Battle of Carchemish (Habakkuk)	605
Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon	604
Jehoiachin captured by Nebuchadnezzar	597
Second capture of Jerusalem	586
Death of Nebuchadnezzar	561
Cyrus receives submission of Babylon (First "Return": Second Isaiah)	538
Death of Cyrus	529
Darius begins to reign	522
Zechariah and Haggai prophesy	520
Xerxes (story of Esther placed in his reign: "Ahasuerus")	485
Artaxerxes I (Nehemiah)	464
Second Return under Ezra	458
Ezra declares the Law	444
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The Ptolemies rule Palestine	320–200
Syrian domination. Antiochus IV	175–164
Antiochus sets up altar to Zeus (Daniel)	168
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John Hyrcanus	135–105
Death of Jannaeus. Salome reigns. (Rise of the Sadducees)	79
Pompey captures Jerusalem	63
Herod the Great	43
Archelaus "ethnarch"	B. C. 4–A. D. 6 (?)
Pilate procurator	A. D. 26–36

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